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Solar PV Developments in the Landscape

Supplementary Planning Document

Prepared for Mid Devon District Council by LUC

May 2016

Project Title: Solar PV Developments in the Landscape –Supplementary Planning Document

Client: Mid Devon District Council

Version	Date	Version Details	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by Director
V0.1	08/05/15	First draft accounting for comments from scoping consultation on Landscape Sensitivity Assessment	AK/SP/SY/RK	SP/RK	SY
V1.0	24/6/15	Wind and solar draft SPD for client comments	AK/SP/SY	SP/SY	SY
V2.0	08/01/16	Change to solar-only SPD following Government policy changes	Sally Parker	Sarah Young	Sarah Young
V3.0	26/01/16	Draft solar SPD accounting for MDDC comments	Sally Parker	Sarah Young	Sarah Young
V4.0	01/02/16	Consultation version	Sally Parker	Sarah Young	Sarah Young
V5.0	13/05/16	Final SPD following consultation	Sally Parker	Sarah Young	Sarah Young

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Summary of the Solar PV Developments in the Landscape SPD

What is the purpose of the SPD?

The 'Solar PV Developments in the Landscape' Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides guidance on:

- Key landscape issues associated with field-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) developments.
- Relative landscape sensitivities of different areas within Mid Devon to solar PV developments (through a specific landscape sensitivity assessment).
- Good siting and design of solar PV schemes including guidance on how potential impacts could be minimised.
- Landscape information which developers should provide when submitting an application for a solar PV development.

Which polices does the SPD support?

The Planning Act 2008 requires that Local Plans contain policies that '*…contribute to the mitigation of, and adaption to, climate change'*. Local policy in Mid Devon supports the principle of renewable energy development provided that potential impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including those which may affect landscape character.

Relevant policies that this SPD will support, taken from the Mid Devon Core Strategy (2007) and Local Plan Part 3: Development Management Policies (2013), are as follows:

- COR2: Local distinctiveness
- COR5: Climate change
- COR18: Countryside
- DM2: High quality design
- DM5: Renewable and low carbon energy
- DM27: Development affecting heritage assets
- DM29: Protected landscapes

Who is the SPD for?

The SPD has been prepared for:

- **Planning officers** and **elected members** - to provide guidance on the relative landscape sensitivities of different areas within Mid Devon to solar PV development and to provide a consistent framework for considering the potential landscape effects of planning applications for such developments within the District.
- **Developers** of solar PV installations - to provide guidance on the key landscape considerations that need to be taken into account when siting and preparing planning applications for solar schemes and how potential impacts can be minimised.
- **Members of the public** - who have an interest in or may wish to comment on proposed solar PV developments through the planning process.

Key principles underpinning this SPD

Principle 1: Solar PV developments should minimise their effects on the landscape through sensitive siting and design.

See Chapter 2: Context.

In order to design and locate solar PV developments to minimise their effects on the landscape, it is important to firstly understand the characteristics of this development type and the impacts schemes may have on landscape character. The main characteristics of ground-mounted solar PV schemes are described in Chapter 2, along with a summary of their potential landscape effects.

Principle 2: Solar PV development should be of a size and scale appropriate to the landscape, with particular regard to its sensitivity to change as a result of such development.

See Chapter 3: The landscapes of Mid Devon; Chapter 4: Method for undertaking the landscape sensitivity assessment; Chapter 5: Strategic patterns of landscape sensitivity across Mid Devon and the detailed Landscape Sensitivity Assessments provided in Appendix 2.

The SPD includes a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for solar PV developments, based on the spatial framework of Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas found in Mid Devon (see Chapter 3, Figure 3.1). Chapter 4 sets out the method followed for undertaking the assessment, considering various scales of solar PV development from very small (<1ha) to very large (>15ha). Sensitivity is judged on a five-point scale from low to high (see Table 4.6).

A summary of the strategic patterns of landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments across Mid Devon is provided in Chapter 5, with district-scale maps illustrating the sensitivity of the different LCTs to the different scales of solar PV development (Figures 5.1 to 5.5). Paragraphs 5.9 to 5.11 provide summary conclusions for siting and designing solar PV developments within the Mid Devon landscape.

Appendix 2 contains detailed assessments and guidance for each LCT found in Mid Devon. Proposals should be designed with all of this information in mind.

Principle 3: Solar PV development proposals should include an assessment of landscape and visual effects, taking into account the location of the site's landscape sensitivity as well as that of adjoining Landscape Character Types and Areas (where appropriate). The cumulative effects of existing and consented solar PV development in the surrounding area should also be considered.

See Chapter 6 and the LCT assessments at Appendix 2.

An assessment of potential landscape and visual effects is a key consideration when proposing solar PV development. It is likely that an assessment of landscape and visual effects, including cumulative effects, will be required to accompany a planning application. Guidance on undertaking Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and cumulative LVIAs are provided in Chapter 6.

Certain developments require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) where thresholds are exceeded as set out in the EIA Regulations (2011). In the case of solar PV development, proposals in excess of 0.5 hectares or in sensitive areas may require a screening for an EIA. Consultation should be undertaken with the Council at the earliest opportunity to clarify if an EIA is required. Guidance on EIA is also provided in Chapter 6.

The LCT assessments provided at Appendix 2 include consideration of views between the different landscapes (other Landscape Character Types and Areas) of Mid Devon, as well as surrounding landscapes beyond the district boundary including Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks, where appropriate. This information should be used when considering a solar PV development proposal.

Structure of the SPD

Chapter 1	**Introduction**
Chapter 2	**Context** Policy context for solar development Main characteristics of solar PV developments and how they might impact on the landscape
Chapter 3	**The landscapes of Mid Devon** Landscape variations across Mid Devon Summary of the Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) that form the framework for the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
Chapter 4	**Method for undertaking the landscape sensitivity assessment** Summary of method used to undertake the landscape sensitivity assessment including: key sources of evidence, description of solar PV developments and assessment criteria
Chapter 5	**Strategic patterns of landscape sensitivity across Mid Devon** Results of landscape sensitivity assessment for solar PV development across the Landscape Character types within Mid Devon
Chapter 6	**How to consider landscape in planning applications for solar PV** Summary of the planning and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process in relation to solar PV developments Detailed guidance on preparing landscape and visual impact assessments (LVIAs) and cumulative landscape and visual impact assessment (cLVIAs) Further References
Appendix 1	**Character Area Summaries**
Appendix 2	**Detailed Landscape Character Type Assessments**

How to use the SPD

This brief User Guide is designed for both developers and decision-makers to help them consider landscape character and sensitivity issues in solar PV development proposals. It is arranged under three key stages, setting out a series of questions as prompts to help determine the landscape impact of a solar PV development. References to where information in the SPD and Devon Landscape Policy Group (DLPG) Advice Note 2[1] can assist in answering these questions are included. Following this process is designed to help shape proposals and assist in planning decisions.

Stage 1 – Landscape sensitivity

- What size is the footprint of the proposed solar PV development (in hectares)? *Please refer to the size bandings set out in Table 4.1 of the SPD.*
- Which Landscape Character Type (LCT) is the proposed development in? *Please refer to Figure 3.1.*
- Is the site characteristic of the wider LCT? *Please refer to the key characteristics provided at the beginning of each LCT assessment in Appendix 2.*
- What is the sensitivity rating for the LCT for the scale of solar PV development being proposed? *See Table 5.1 or the relevant LCT assessment(s) in Appendix 2.*
- Do any of the 'Sensitive Features/Characteristics' set out for the relevant LCT, in Appendix 2, apply to the proposed development site?

Stage 2 – Detailed siting and design considerations

- Is the size of the solar PV development proposed in line with the 'Guidance for Development' provided for the relevant LCT, including the 'Additional guidance specific to particular Landscape Character Areas'? If not how does it differ? *Refer to the relevant LCT assessment(s) in Appendix 2.*
- Does the proposal accord with the generic guidance for solar PV development contained in the Devon Landscape Policy Group (DLPG) Advice Note 2 (Chapter 3)? If not, what aspects of the proposed development conflict with which parts of the guidance?
- Does the siting and design of the scheme accord with the 'Guidance for Development' for the relevant LCT? If not, what aspects of the proposed development conflict with which parts of the guidance? *Refer to the relevant LCT assessment(s) in Appendix 2.*
- Have opportunities been taken to mitigate significant adverse effects and opportunities for landscape enhancement been included as part of the proposal? *Refer to para 6.18 of the SPD and Chapter 3 (page 47) of the DLPG Advice Note 2.*

Stage 3 – Cumulative impact

- Is the development in line with the guidance on 'Designing for Multiple Developments' set out in Chapter 3 of DLPG Advice Note 2 and the 'Guidance Development' set for the relevant LCT? *Refer to the relevant LCT assessment(s) in Appendix 2.*
- If not, which guidance does it conflict with?
- Will solar PV developments have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape of that LCT?

[1] DLPG (2013) Advice Note 2: Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape. Available at http://www.devon.gov.uk/devon-guidance-v6-june-2013-final-report.pdf

1 Introduction

What is the purpose of this SPD?

1.1 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides guidance on:

- key landscape issues associated with solar photovoltaic (PV) developments;
- relative landscape sensitivities of different areas within Mid Devon to solar PV developments (through a specific landscape sensitivity assessment[2]);
- good siting and design of solar PV schemes including guidance on how potential impacts could be minimised;
- landscape information which developers should provide when submitting an application for a solar PV development.

1.2 This SPD has been prepared in accordance with Part 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The SPD does not form part of the Development Plan but is a material consideration in the determination of solar planning applications in the area. It adds further detail to the policies of the Mid Devon Local Plan, including:

- **Core Strategy 2026** (Adopted 2007) - policies COR 2 Local Distinctiveness and COR 18 Countryside and Local Plan 3; and
- **Local Plan Part 3**: Development Management Policies (Adopted 2013) – policies DM 2 High Quality Design; DM 5 Renewable and low carbon energy; and DM 29 Protected landscapes.

1.3 The guidance covers a range of different scales of solar PV developments (definitions of the different scales of these developments are provided in **Chapter 4**). Developments above 50MW are currently determined by the National Infrastructure Directorate of the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State. The Council are a consultee on applications determined under this process and this SPD will be used to help formulate the Council's formal response to such proposals.

1.4 Domestic or commercial roof top solar panels are not specifically covered in this SPD as they do not require planning permission, as long as specified limits and conditions of permitted development rights are met[3].

Why is the SPD needed?

1.5 Mid Devon District is faced with a wide range of challenges arising from a changing climate. Balancing the need to make a meaningful contribution towards reducing harmful emissions from our energy use (through cleaner energy production) with the management of Mid Devon's unique landscape is one of these key challenges. The District's landscape is vitally important to the local economy as well as parts being of national importance for its natural beauty: 6.5% of the District falls within the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and 0.3% falls within Dartmoor National Park.

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[2] Please note that a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for wind energy development has also been prepared for the Council as part of the Local Plan evidence base. On the 18th June 2015, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government released a Ministerial Statement on onshore wind energy. This stated that when considering applications for wind energy development, local planning authorities should only grant planning permission if the development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan; and it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing. Due to this significant change in Government policy, it was decided that this SPD would only cover solar developments and that the Council would give separate consideration to the application of the new policy context for wind. The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment will remain a material consideration for any wind energy development planning applications.

[3] The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/596/contents/made

1.6 The landscape has a significant economic, social and community value, contributing to a sense of identity, well-being, enjoyment and inspiration and being a major contributor to a strong tourism industry. It also has an environmental value, as a home for wildlife and a cultural record of society's use of the land.

1.7 At the same time, Mid Devon District has good conditions to produce solar energy. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes it clear that local authorities should take a positive approach towards renewable and low carbon developments. One of the core principles that underpins the NPPF is that: *"planning should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate,….and encourage the use of renewable resources."*

1.8 It also states that local planning authorities should "*have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources*" and "*design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts)".* [Para 97].

1.9 The Council recognises these opportunities and understands the need to maximise renewable energy generation (which can have environmental, economic, social and other benefits). However, the development of solar electricity generating installations within Mid Devon needs to be managed carefully to achieve the greatest contribution towards our energy needs, while at the same time ensuring that the important characteristics of the landscape are not unacceptably harmed.

Who is the SPD for?

1.10 The SPD has been prepared for:

- **Planning officers** and **elected members** - to provide guidance on the relative landscape sensitivities of different areas within Mid Devon to solar PV development and to provide a consistent framework for considering the potential landscape effects of planning applications for such developments within the District.
- **Developers** of solar PV installations - to provide guidance on the key landscape considerations that need to be taken into account when siting and preparing planning applications for solar schemes and how potential impacts can be minimised.
- **Members of the public** - who have an interest in or may wish to comment on proposed solar PV developments through the planning process.

How was the SPD prepared?

1.11 This SPD has been designed to be in line with the county-wide approach to the siting and design of renewable energy developments in the landscape, as set out in the Devon Landscape Policy Group (DLPG) Guidance Note 2 (2013). As such, many sections of the guidance included in this SPD are taken directly from the note, with kind permission from DLPG.

1.12 Consultation has been central to the preparation of the SPD. In accordance with the Council's own Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (Adopted 2012)[4] two stages of consultation, an informal scoping consultation and a consultation on the draft SPD were undertaken before the guidance was formally adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.

1.13 A scoping consultation was undertaken in July 2014. This comprised a scoping report which presented the subject, scope and potential content of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (LSA) and sought to gather the initial views of developers, the local community and other interested parties. The scoping report asked whether there were any other issues not already covered by the LSA that should be considered within the scope of the SPD, and why. In total 13 formal responses were received and are provided in a separate Consultation Statement. The representations from the scoping consultation were taken into account in the production of a draft SPD.

[4] www.middevon.gov.uk/sci

1.14 In accordance with Policy SCI/14 of the Statement of Community Involvement (2012), a second phase of consultation was undertaken on the draft SPD, prepared in February 2016. In total 18 valid responses were received. The representations are summarised in a separate Consultation Statement and were taken into account in the production of this final SPD.

What are the limitations of the SPD?

1.15 This SPD focuses on the potential landscape issues associated with solar PV developments. It does not provide guidance on the wide range of other planning issues that may need to be considered as part of the preparation and determination of planning applications. These potential issues include:

- Ecology and ornithology
- Historic environment
- Hydrology
- Traffic and transport
- Noise and vibration
- Socio-economic activities (e.g. tourism)
- Agricultural land use / productivity
- Glint and glare

1.16 The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (see Chapters 4 and 5) provides an initial indication of the relative landscape sensitivities of different areas within Mid Devon to solar PV development and guidance for accommodating such developments in the district's landscape. **It should not however be interpreted as a definitive statement on the suitability of a certain location for a particular development. All developments will need to be assessed on their individual merits.** It is also unrelated to any Government targets for renewable energy development or studies of technical potential.

1.17 It is also important to note that the sensitivity assessment is not influenced by the presence of existing renewable energy developments in the landscape which pre-date the study.

1.18 It is also not the intention of the guidance to replicate existing information/guidance. Readers are therefore directed to other sources of national, regional and local policy guidance or information which provides further advice on the key issues raised. Over time guidance documents referred to in this SPD may be revised or replaced and the most up to date version of the guidance documents should be used when they are published.

What does the SPD cover?

1.19 The SPD includes the following:

Chapter 2	**Context** Policy context for solar development Main characteristics of solar PV developments and how they might impact on the landscape
Chapter 3	**The landscapes of Mid Devon** Landscape variations across Mid Devon Summary of the Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) that form the framework for the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
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2 Context

Introduction

2.1 This chapter sets out the policy context in relation to solar PV developments at a national and local level. This is followed by a brief description of main characteristics of solar PV and how they might impact on the landscape.

Policy context

National

2.2 Along with other local authorities nationally, Mid Devon District Council is obliged to address the requirements of the Planning Act 2008 in producing Development Plans that contribute to climate change adaptation/mitigation. More generally, the UK as a whole must address the Climate Change Act 2008 and the EU Renewable Energy Directive 2009 in terms of meeting carbon reduction- and renewable energy installation- targets. The Council must balance the need to support the transition to a low carbon future (a core planning principle of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) [5]) and the need for energy security (as recognised in the National Policy Statement (EN-3) for Renewable Energy Infrastructure[6])) with the protection/enhancement of the District's distinctive and valued landscapes – also a core principle of the NPPF.

2.3 The NPPF states within its core planning principles that planning *should "take account of the different roles and character of different areas…… recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it"*.

2.4 The NPPF calls for valued landscapes to be protected and enhanced (para 109), with the greatest weight being given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) (para 115). It also promotes good design and suggests (para 64) that *"permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions".*

2.5 The NPPF (para 97) calls on local planning authorities to design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts. It requires local planning authorities to approve applications for renewable energy if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable (para 98); and suggests that they take a positive approach by identifying suitable areas for renewable energy generation and its supporting infrastructure (para 97), making clear what criteria have determined their selection.

2.6 In addition to the NPPF, the Government published national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in 2014, as a streamlined web-based resource that accompanies the NPPF[7]. Paragraph 001 of the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy section states that "*planning has an important role in the delivery of new renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure in locations where the local environmental impact is acceptable."* Paragraph 005 outlines how local planning authorities can identify suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy, stating "*there are no hard and fast rules about how suitable areas for renewable energy should be identified, but in considering locations, local planning authorities will need to ensure they take into account the requirements of the technology and, critically, the potential impacts on the local environment, including from*

[5] Department for Communities and Local Government (March 2012) *National Planning Policy Framework*.
[6] Department of Energy and Climate Change (July 2011) *National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure, EN-3*.
[7] Department for Communities and Local Government See: http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy/

cumulative impacts." It also states how in considering impacts, tools such as Landscape Character Assessments can help to identify where impacts are likely to be more acceptable.

Local

2.7 The Planning Act 2008 requires that Local Plans contain policies designed to *"..contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change".* There is policy support at a local level to the principle of renewable energy development as long as potential impacts are addressed satisfactory; including effects on landscape character or heritage. Climate change is now widely accepted as a major issue which has the potential to contribute to landscape change. Relevant policies taken from the Mid Devon Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2026[8] and Local Plan Part 3: Development Management Policies[9], and are summarised in **Table 2.1** below – bold text indicates those sections of particular relevance.

Table 2.1: Relevant local planning policies

Planning Policies taken from Core Strategy 2026	
COR 2 Local Distinctiveness	Development will sustain the distinctive quality, character and diversity of Mid Devon's environmental assets through: **a) high quality sustainable design which reinforces the character and legibility of Mid Devon's built environment and creates attractive places,** b) the efficient use and conservation of natural resources of land, water and energy, **c) the preservation and enhancement of the distinctive qualities of Mid Devon's natural landscape, supporting opportunities identified within landscape character areas. Within the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or adjoining the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Exmoor and Dartmoor National Parks, the primary objective will be to protect the special environmental qualities of that landscape and its setting,** d) the protection and enhancement of designated sites of national and local biodiversity and geodiversity importance. Development will support opportunities for protecting and enhancing species populations and the restoration, recreation, enhancement and linking of habitats to contribute toward the delivery of Biodiversity Action Plan targets, and **e) the preservation and enhancement of Mid Devon's cultural and historic environment, and the protection of sites, buildings, areas and features of recognised national and local importance.**
COR 5 Climate Change	Measures will be sought which minimise the impact of development on climate change, and contribute towards national and regional targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, including: **a) the development of renewable energy capacity will be supported in locations with an acceptable local impact, including visual, on nearby residents and wildlife.** b) energy efficiency improvement measures will be supported with an acceptable impact on historic interest. c) it is intended that all new development will be carbon neutral in development and use as soon as a detailed approach can be developed through the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

[8] Mid Devon Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2026, Adopted July 2007: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=7872&p=0

[9] Local Plan Part 3 Development Management Policies, Adopted October 2013: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=20803&p=0

	on this subject. This is likely to be through appropriate choice of materials, energy efficiency measures, transport management, renewable energy generation and carbon fixing. Until such time as the SPD is adopted all development should take positive measures to reduce carbon emissions to a realistic minimum.
COR 18 Countryside	Development outside the settlements defined by COR13 -COR17 will be strictly controlled, enhancing the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside while promoting sustainable diversification of the rural economy. Detailed development control policies will permit agricultural and other appropriate rural uses, subject to appropriate criteria, as follows: a) affordable housing to meet local needs, gypsy accommodation, replacement dwellings, housing essential to accommodate an agricultural or forestry worker and accommodation ancillary to a dwelling; b) appropriately scaled retail, employment, farm diversification and tourism related development (including conversion of existing buildings); c) appropriately scaled and designed extensions and other physical alterations to existing buildings; d) agricultural buildings; e) community facilities, such as educational facilities, buildings associated with public open space, development required to support or enhance biodiversity or geodiversity interests, transportation and infrastructure proposals, horse riding establishments and golf facilities; and **f) renewable energy and telecommunications.**
Planning Policies taken from Local Plan Part 3: Development Management Policies	
DM 2 High Quality Design	Designs of new development must be of high quality, based upon and demonstrating the following principles: **a) Clear understanding of the characteristics of the site, its wider context and the surrounding area;** b) Efficient and effective use of the site, having regard to criterion (a); **c) Positive contribution on to local character** including any heritage or biodiversity assets **and the setting of heritage assets**; d) Creation of safe and accessible places that also encourage sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling; e) **Visually at places that are well integrated with surrounding buildings, streets and landscapes**, and do not have an unacceptably adverse effect on the privacy and amenity of the proposed or neighbouring properties and uses, taking account of: i) Architecture ii) Siting, layout, scale and massing iii) Orientation and fenestration iv) Materials, landscaping and green infrastructure f) Appropriate drainage including sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) and connection of foul drainage to a mains sewer where available. Major residential development proposals will be required to achieve

	'green' status under at least 8 of the 12 Building for Life criteria.
DM 5 Renewable and low carbon energy	**The benefits of renewable and low carbon energy development will be weighed against its impact. Proposals for renewable or low carbon energy will be permitted where they do not have significant adverse impacts on the character, amenity and visual quality of the area, including cumulative impacts of similar developments within the parish or adjoining parishes.** Where significant impacts are identified through Environmental Impact Assessment, the Council will balance the impact against the wider benefits of delivering renewable and low carbon energy. **Development must consider:** **a) Landscape character and heritage assets;** **b) Environmental amenity of nearby properties in accordance with Policy DM7;** c) Quality and productivity of the best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a); d) Biodiversity (avoiding habitat fragmentation).
DM 27 Development affecting heritage assets	Heritage assets and their settings are an irreplaceable resource. Accordingly the Council will: a) Apply a presumption in favour of preservation in situ in respect of the most important heritage assets. **b) Require development proposals likely to affect heritage assets and their settings**, including new buildings, alterations, extensions, changes of use and demolitions, **to consider their significance, character, setting and local distinctiveness, and the opportunities to enhance them.** c) Only approve proposals that would be likely to substantially harm heritage assets and their settings if substantial public benefit outweighs that harm or the requirements of paragraph 133 of the National Planning Policy Framework are met. d) Where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm, that harm will be weighed against any public benefit, including securing optimum viable use. e) Require developers to make a proportionate but systematic assessment of the impact on setting as set down in the guidance from English Heritage: "The Setting of Heritage Assets".
DM 29 Protected landscapes	Development proposals within or affecting the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Dartmoor National Park, Exmoor National Park and the North Devon Biosphere Reserve must demonstrate that: **a) Cultural heritage and the character, appearance, setting and other special qualities of the landscape will be conserved or, where possible, enhanced; and** b) Biodiversity will be conserved and enhanced where possible through improved linking of habitats, appropriate landscaping and habitat creation. **Major developments within protected landscapes or adjoining the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Dartmoor or Exmoor National Parks will only be permitted in exceptional cases.**

2.8 The evidence provided by this Landscape Sensitivity Supplementary Planning Document directly supports the above policies.

Main characteristics of solar PV developments and how they might impact on the landscape

2.9 In order to minimise effects on the landscape through siting and design (the purpose of this SPD), it is important to first understand the characteristics of solar PV developments and how they may affect the landscape.

Free-standing solar photovoltaic (PV) developments

2.10 Free-standing solar PV developments consist of panels that are usually mounted around 0.7m-3m above ground level allowing the growth of vegetation beneath and between the arrays and the associated grazing of stock. Panels are arranged in groups or 'arrays' of around 20 panels. The panels are encased in an aluminium frame, supported by aluminium or steel stands, and positioned at a fixed angle between 20-40 degrees from the horizontal, facing south. These arrays usually take the form of a linear rack of panels. These arrays or linear racks are usually sited in parallel rows with gaps between the rows for access and to prevent shading of adjacent rows. They therefore do not cover a whole field. The actual arrangement of the arrays within the landscape varies from scheme-to-scheme (i.e. regular layouts versus more varied and irregular, depending on the site situation). Generally though, layouts of the solar arrays tend to be regular.

2.11 Photovoltaic technology requires absorption of sunlight to allow for the conversion of energy to take place and therefore very little light energy is lost through reflection. Glare is further minimised through the use of translucent coating materials to improve light transmittance through the glass. Nevertheless panels do change under different atmospheric conditions, tending to reflect the light and colour of the sky, and the appearance of the panels under different atmospheric conditions is an important consideration in terms of the visual effects of schemes.

2.12 Solar PV developments are usually given planning permission for 25 years. An example of a solar array in the Mid Devon landscape is shown at **Figure 2.2** below.

Figure 2.2: Example of a solar PV development near Crediton

2.13 Examples of potential landscape effects arising from solar PV developments include:

- **Field-scale solar PV developments may be particularly visible in open landscapes or on upper hill slopes**, especially where they cover significant areas of land.
- **Large grouping of solar panels tend to reflect the sky** - for example, on a sunny day they can appear blue while on a cloudy day they can appear a metallic grey – this can make them stand out from their landscape context.
- **The perceived industrial character of large-scale solar PV developments could detract from the intrinsically rural character of many parts of Mid Devon,** including landscapes that form a setting to heritage assets.
- **Ancillary buildings and security requirements** (such as fencing and/or CCTV) may introduce new and unfamiliar features into Mid Devon's rural landscape.
- **Solar PV developments can change the land use and appearance of a field or fields, affecting land cover patterns**, although traditional livestock grazing can still take place between and beneath the panels**.**
- **The regular edges of solar PV developments may be conspicuous in more irregular landscapes** (particularly where they do not follow contours or where field boundaries are irregular in form).
- **The height of racks (up to 3m) means that they may overtop typical hedgerow/hedgebank field boundaries.** However, many parts of Mid Devon are defined by high Devon hedgebanks which could provide a sympathetic screening function to schemes.
- **Screen planting around solar PV development, or management changes such as allowing hedges to grow higher, can change the sense of enclosure of a landscape**.
- **Construction of the solar PV development may result in loss or damage to landscape features** such as hedgerow/hedgebank field boundaries – particularly the larger schemes.
- **Access tracks will be necessary on field scale schemes with central inverters** (central inverters cannot be delivered and maintained using temporary tracks). In these cases the tracks may be highly visible, particularly in open or undeveloped landscapes that currently may not contain such infrastructure.

3 The landscapes of Mid Devon

Introduction

3.1 This chapter summarises the landscape variations across Mid Devon and the Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) that form the framework for the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.

Brief summary of key landscape variations across the District

3.2 Mid Devon has a mixed and diverse landscape, from open exposed ridge tops and undulating hills (including part of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)) to steep sided valleys enclosed by characteristic species-rich Devon hedges. The area also includes the 'hidden secretive landscapes' of the River Culm tributaries, with much of the wider district defined by a strong feeling of remoteness and high levels of tranquillity.

3.3 Tiverton is the largest town in the district supported by smaller market towns including Cullompton and Crediton. The landscape's strongly rural characteristics complement an historic sense of place – with medieval field patterns interspersed within the productive agricultural landscape, broken by tracts of internationally important Culm grasslands and scattered traditional settlements typically associated with Devon. Intervisibility with the uplands of Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park, particularly from higher ground, is a strong feature of the Mid Devon landscape.

Landscape Character Assessment framework

3.4 Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) form the spatial framework and evidence base for this Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (see **Figure 3.1**).

Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment (2011)

3.5 There are 11 Landscape Character Types (LCTs) falling within Mid Devon District, as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment (2011)[10]:

LCT 1: Plateaux and Ridges

1A: Open inland planned plateaux

1E: Wooded ridges and hilltops

1F: Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland

LCT 2: Scarp Slopes

2A: Steep wooded scarp slopes

LCT 3: Valleys

3A: Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes

3B: Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes

3C: Sparsely settled farmed valley floors

3E: Lowland plains

3G: River Valley Slopes and Combes

[10] https://new.middevon.gov.uk/residents/planning-policy/adopted-local-plan-evidence/landscape-character-assessment/

3H: Secluded Valleys

LCT 5: Rolling Hills

5A: Inland Elevated Undulating Land

3.6 The Landscape Character Assessment provides descriptive information for each of these LCTs, forming the primary evidence base for the assessments provided in **Appendix 2**.

Devon Landscape Character Assessment (2011)

3.7 Devon County Council's county-wide Landscape Character Assessment[11] identifies 18 Devon Character Areas (DCAs) that lie partially or wholly within Mid Devon District, shown alongside the LCTs mapped in **Figure 3.1.** Summary character descriptions for each of the 18 DCAs found within the District are included in **Appendix 1**.

Historic Landscape Character Assessment for Devon

3.8 Devon's Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), undertaken in 2005[12], maps historic landscape types found across Devon. The Historic Landscape Types (HLTs) used to inform this study are mapped at **Figure 3.2**.

3.9 For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that landscapes comprising medieval enclosures (including strip fields) have a higher sensitivity to the larger scale solar PV developments than landscapes comprising larger post-medieval or modern enclosures or industrial/military historic landscape types (HLTs). This is due to the potential for the developments to affect the coherence of these landscapes (including effects of access tracks on field boundaries) and the ability to appreciate them in the landscape. Historic Landscape Types such as rough ground, ancient woodland, other woodland[13], watermeadows and orchards also have a higher sensitivity to solar PV development of any scale as a result of potential changes to the coherence of these HLTs.

3.10 It will be important that historic landscape character is conserved as far as possible when siting renewable energy development. The Council holds the GIS data for the Historic Landscape Types which can be queried at a site level to provide further fine-grained locational information on the presence of these sensitive HLTs.

3.11 Please see the detailed Landscape Character Type assessment profiles at **Appendix 2** for further detail.

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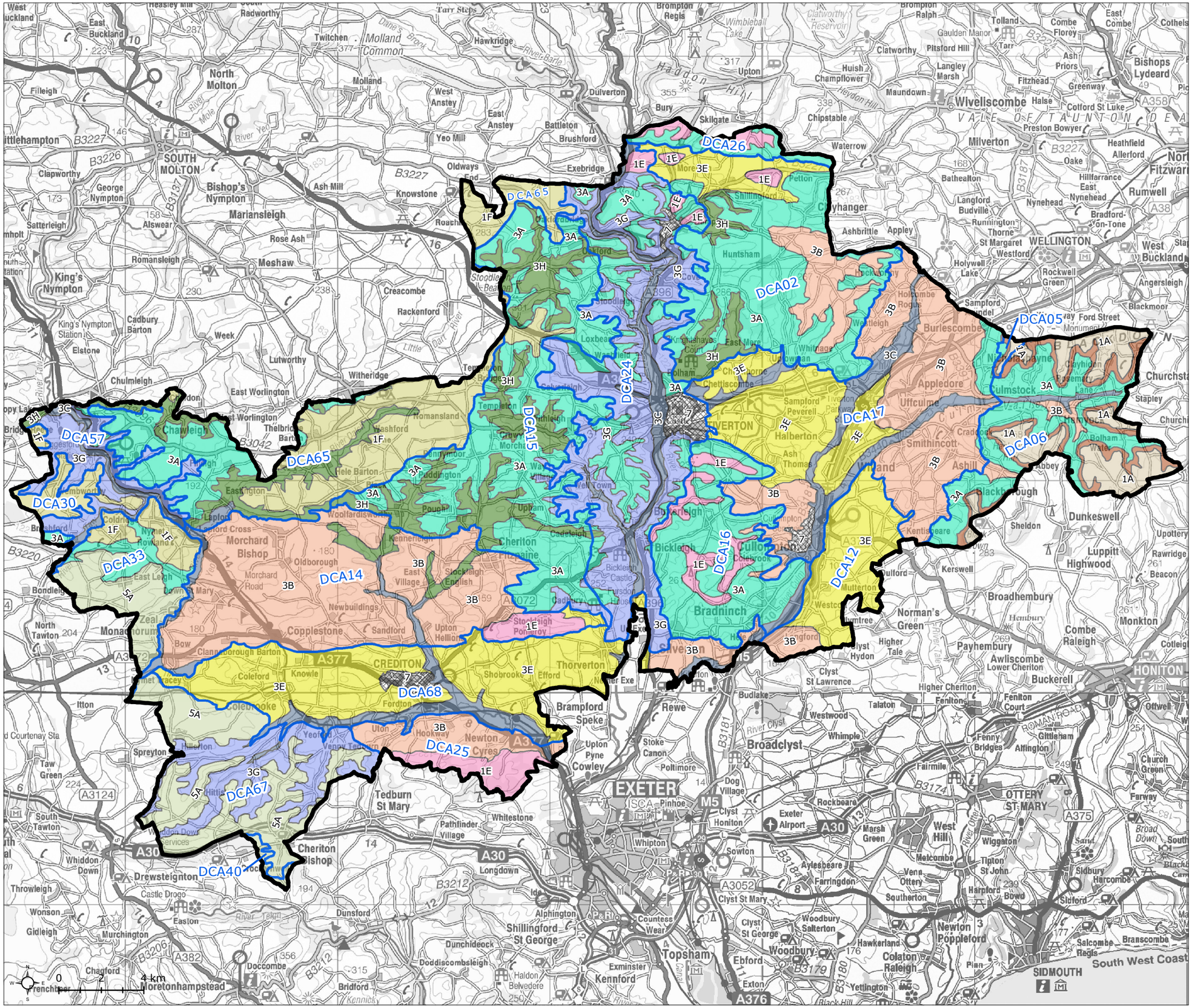
[11] http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/environmentplanning/natural_environment/landscape/devon-character-areas.htm

[12] http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/environmentplanning/historic_environment/landscapes/landscape-characterisation/historiclandscapecharacterisationmethodology.htm

[13] Other woodland is defined as "*all other woodland including broad-leaved plantations, re-planted ancient woodland or secondary woodland that has grown up from scrub*" in the Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation (2005).



Landscape Implications of Solar PV Proposals SPD

Figure 3.1

The Landscape Character Assessment Framework

Mid Devon District Boundary

Landscape Character Areas

- DCA02 : Bampton and Beer Downs
- DCA05 : Blackdown Hills Scarp
- DCA06 : Blackdown Hills
- DCA12 : Clyst Lowland Farmlands
- DCA14 : Crediton Rolling Farmland
- DCA15 : Cruwys Morchard Wooded and Farmed Valleys
- DCA16 : Cullompton Rolling Farmland
- DCA17 : Culm Valley Lowlands
- DCA24 : Exe Valley
- DCA25 : Exeter Slopes and Hills
- DCA26 : Exmoor Fringe
- DCA30 : High Culm Ridges
- DCA33 : High Taw Farmland
- DCA40 : Moretonhampstead Moorland Fringes
- DCA57 : Taw Valley
- DCA65 : Witheridge and Rackenford Moor
- DCA67 : Yeo Uplands and Slopes
- DCA68 : Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands

Landscape Character Types

- 1A : Open inland planned plateaux
- 1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
- 1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
- 2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
- 3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
- 3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
- 3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
- 3E : Lowland plains
- 3G : River valley slopes and combes
- 3H : Secluded valleys
- 5A : Inland elevated undulating land
- 7 : Main cities and towns

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

LUC

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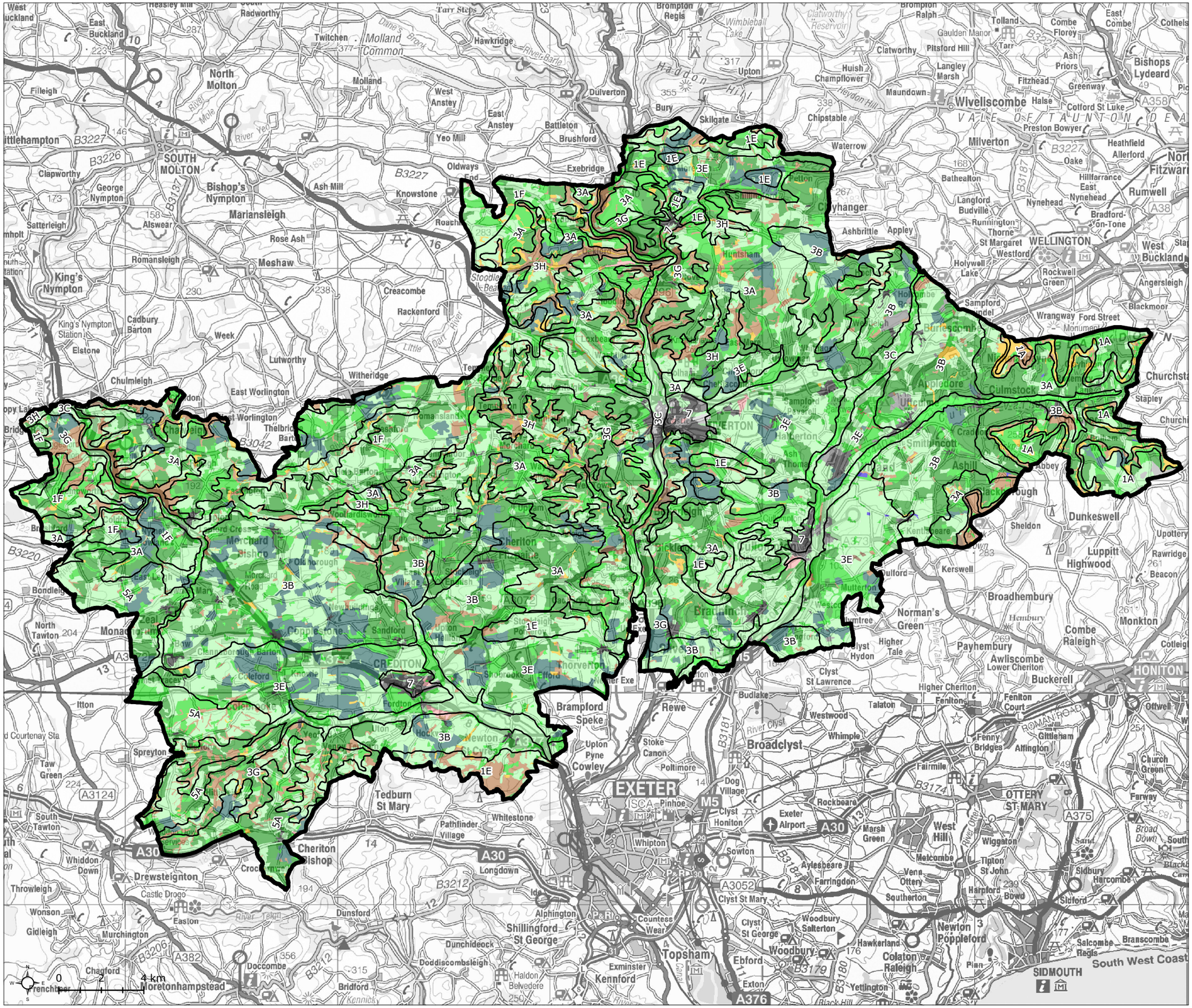
LUC LDN 6431-01_001_Fig3_1_SOLAR_Landscape_Character_Assessment 26/01/2016

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council



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LUC LDN 6431-01_002_Fig3_2_SOLAR_Historic_Landscape_Types 26/01/2016

Landscape Implications of Solar PV Proposals SPD

Figure 3.2

Historic Landscape Types in Mid Devon

- Mid Devon District Boundary
- Water
- Recreation
- Horticulture
- Quarries
- Public complex
- Industrial complex
- Military complex
- Park/garden
- Orchard
- Historic settlements
- Rough ground (various)
- Watermeadow (various)
- Conifers and Other woodland
- Post-medieval enclosures (various)
- Barton fields
- Ancient woodland
- Medieval enclosures (various)
- Modern settlement
- Airfield
- Woodland with old field boundaries
- Modern enclosures (various)s
- Former airfield
- Former orchards

Landscape Character Types

- 1A : Open inland planned plateaux
- 1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
- 1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
- 2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
- 3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
- 3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
- 3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
- 3E : Lowland plains
- 3G : River valley slopes and combes
- 3H : Secluded valleys
- 5A : Inland elevated undulating land
- 7 : Main cities and towns

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

LUC

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council

4 Method for undertaking the landscape sensitivity assessment

Introduction

4.1 This chapter summarises the method that was used to undertake the landscape sensitivity assessment including the key sources of evidence used, the types of development considered and the assessment criteria and process followed.

Spatial and descriptive framework

4.2 Mid Devon's Landscape Character Types (LCTs) form the spatial framework and primary evidence base for the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, as previously discussed and illustrated in **Figure 3.1**. A thorough desk-based study, drawing on other sources of spatial and descriptive information about the landscape, was supplemented by field survey work by a team of landscape professionals to verify and use professional judgement to produce the landscape sensitivity assessments.

4.3 Other key sources of information used to inform the assessment include:

- The Devon Historic Landscape Character assessment (HLC).
- The special qualities and spatial boundaries of the Blackdown Hills AONB, Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks.
- Ordnance survey base maps (1:250K, 1:50K and 1:25K).
- Aerial photography (Google Earth).

Scale of solar PV developments considered

4.4 The assessment is based on field scale developments, also described and illustrated in **Chapter 2.** It considers the suitability of different scales of solar PV development based on bandings that reflect those that are most likely to be put forward by developers (now and in the future). These are also consistent with the DLPG Guidance Note, and are set out in **Table 4.1** below:

Table 4.1: Development sizes/scales used for this assessment

Solar PV scale bandings	Size (hectares)
Very small	<1ha
Small	>1-5ha
Medium	>5-10ha
Large	>10-15ha
Very large	>15ha

Comparable features for solar PV developments

4.5 In order to visualise how the different scales of solar PV developments set out above relate to features (and current solar schemes) found in Mid Devon District, a list of comparable features is provided in **Table 4.3** below.

Table 4.3: Features/current schemes as size comparators for solar PV schemes

Feature	Size
Football pitch	0.6-0.8ha
Very Small Solar PV Scheme	**<1ha**
Small Solar PV Scheme	**>1-5ha**
Average size of medieval enclosures based on strip fields	1ha
Medium Solar PV Scheme	**>5-10ha**
Ellicombe Farm Solar Farm	5.81ha (see **Figure 4.8** below)
Large Solar PV Scheme	**>10-15ha**
Typical size of 'modern' field enclosures	5-15ha
Very Large Solar PV Scheme	**>15ha**
Ayshford Court Farm Solar Farm	16.53 ha (see **Figure 4.9** below)

Figure 4.8: Ellicombe Farm solar farm, Crediton (in the medium-scale category)

Figure 4.9: Ayshford Court Farm, Westleigh solar PV site (in the 'very large' category)

Evaluating landscape sensitivity

4.6 There is currently no published method for evaluating the sensitivity of different types of landscape to renewable energy developments. However, the approach taken in this study builds on current guidance published by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage including the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance[14] and Topic Paper 6[15] that accompanies the Guidance, as well as the county-wide approach set out in the DLPG Advice Note 2.

4.7 Paragraph 4.2 of Topic Paper 6 states that:

'Judging landscape character sensitivity requires professional judgement about the degree to which the landscape in question is robust, in that it is able to accommodate change without adverse impacts on character. This involves making decisions about whether or not significant characteristic elements of the landscape will be liable to loss... and whether important aesthetic aspects of character will be liable to change'

4.8 In this study the following definition of sensitivity has been used, which is based on the principles set out in Topic Paper 6. It is also compliant with the third edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA 3, 2013) as well as definitions used in other landscape sensitivity studies of this type:

Landscape sensitivity is the extent to which the character and quality of the landscape is susceptible to change as a result of solar PV developments.

Assessment criteria

4.9 In line with the recommendations in Topic Paper 6, this landscape sensitivity assessment is based on an assessment of landscape character using carefully defined criteria. The criteria used for determining landscape sensitivity to solar PV development in Mid Devon are consistent with the DLPG Advice Note 2. These are based on attributes of the landscape most likely to be affected by the type of development concerned (i.e. solar PV).

4.10 **Table 4.4** sets out the criteria that have been used for the assessment of landscape sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development (of any size). It includes guidance and examples for applying the criteria in Mid Devon, which were then verified through professional judgement and field verification for each Landscape Character Type.

[14] The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland CAX 84

[15] The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2004) Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity.

Table 4.4: Criteria and guidance for assessing landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments

Landform				
A flat or gently undulating lowland landscape or extensive plateau is likely to be less sensitive to solar PV development than a landscape with prominent landforms and visible slopes, including coastal headlands. This is because arrays of solar PV panels will be less easily perceived in a flat landscape than on a slope, especially higher slopes. Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; contours from the Ordnance Survey basemaps; Topography data (Ordnance Survey Panorama); fieldwork.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity ⟷				**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. a lowland flat landscape or extensive plateau	e.g. a gently undulating lowland landscape or plateau	e.g. an undulating landscape with hidden areas as well as some visible slopes	e.g. a landscape with many prominent, visible slopes or an upland landscape	e.g. very steep landform and exposed, visible slopes
Sense of openness / enclosure				
A landscape with a strong sense of enclosure (e.g. provided by land cover such as woodland or high hedgebanks) is likely to be less sensitive to solar PV development than an open and unenclosed landscape because the development will be less easily perceived, especially at a distance, in an enclosed landscape. Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; Google Earth / aerial photographs; fieldwork.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity ⟷				**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. a very well enclosed landscaped – perhaps provided by thick, high hedgebanks and hedgerows, tree belts and woodland	e.g. relatively high levels of enclosure provided by hedgebanks and thick hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees	e.g. a landscape with some open and some more enclosed areas – likely to be a rural landscape with some hedgebanks and hedgerows and tree belts	e.g. an open landscape with little sense of enclosure (low, few or no hedgebanks or hedgerows, few trees)	e.g. an extremely open landscape such as an unenclosed plateau with no field boundaries or trees

Field pattern and scale				
Landscapes with small-scale, more irregular field patterns are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of solar PV development than landscapes with large, regular scale field patterns because of the risk of diluting or masking the characteristic landscape patterns. This would be particularly apparent if development takes place across a number of adjacent fields where the field pattern is small and intricate (bearing in mind that the height of panels could exceed that of a hedge/ hedgebank). Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation; Ordnance survey 1:25K basemap (showing field patterns); Google Earth (aerial photography); fieldwork.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		⟷	**Higher sensitivity**	
e.g. a landscape with large-scale, regular fields of mainly modern origin	e.g. a landscape which is mainly defined by large, modern fields	e.g. a landscape with a mixture of large-scale, modern fields and some smaller, more historic enclosure	e.g. a landscape dominated by ancient, small-scale field patterns with a few isolated areas of modern enclosure	e.g. a landscape characterised by small-scale, ancient field patterns

Landcover				
Since PV panels introduce a new land cover (of built structures), landscapes containing existing hard surfacing or built elements (e.g. urban areas, brownfield sites or large-scale horticulture) are likely to be less sensitive to field-scale solar PV development than highly rural or naturalistic landscapes. Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; Google Earth (aerial photography); fieldwork.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity			**Higher sensitivity**	
e.g. an urban or 'brownfield' landscape	e.g. an area of large scale horticulture	e.g. a rural landscape, perhaps with some brownfield sites or urban influences	e.g. a rural landscape , perhaps with some areas of semi-natural land cover	e.g. a landscape dominated by semi-natural land cover

Perceptual qualities				
Landscapes that are relatively remote or tranquil (due to freedom from human activity and disturbance and having a perceived naturalness or a strong feel of traditional rurality with few modern human influences) tend to increase levels of sensitivity to solar PV development compared to landscapes that contain signs of modern development (as the development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquillity and or remoteness/ naturalness). Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; CPRE's Tranquillity and Intrusion mapping; Ordnance Survey basemaps (presence / absence of development, settlement, structures).				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity ⟷				**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. a landscape with much human activity and development such as industrial areas or a port	e.g. a rural landscape with much human activity and dispersed modern development	e.g. a rural landscape with some modern development and human activity	e.g. a more naturalistic landscape and / or one with little modern human influence and development	e.g. a remote or 'wild' landscape with little or no signs of current human activity and development
Historic Landscape Character				
Due to intrinsic historic landscape character significance, or potential for preserved archaeological evidence, historic landscape types (HLTs) such as rough ground with earlier remains, prehistoric fields, watermeadows, and fields with a medieval historic character type such as strip fields, enclosures (strips) and enclosures – medieval have a higher sensitivity to solar development. Some more recent but discrete enclosed landscapes may also be sensitive, such as 'barton' fields. Lower sensitivity landscapes include industrial landscapes, coniferous plantations, airfields, and post medieval/modern enclosures. Information sources: Devon Landscape Character Assessment; Devon HLC.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity ⟷				**Higher sensitivity**
e.g. majority of the landscape covered by least sensitive HLTs	e.g. majority of the landscape covered by lower sensitivity HLTs, but may include some small areas of higher sensitivity	e.g. majority of the landscape covered by medium sensitivity HLTs or a mixture of higher and lower sensitivity HLTs	e.g. majority of the landscape covered by higher sensitivity HLTs, but may include some small areas of lower sensitivity	e.g. the majority of the landscape covered by higher sensitivity HLTs

Scenic and special qualities				
Landscapes that have a high scenic quality (which may be recognised as a National Park, Heritage Coast or AONB) will be more sensitive than landscapes of low scenic quality. This is particularly the case where their special qualities (as recorded in the Landscape Character Assessment or designation documents) are likely to be affected by solar PV development. Scenic and special qualities may relate to landscapes that are not designated as well as landscape designated for their natural beauty. Information sources: National Park 'special qualities' and AONB 'Statements of Significance' in Management Plans; Landscape Character Assessment 'special qualities and features' information.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		⟷		**Higher sensitivity**
landscape has low scenic quality such as an industrial area or despoiled land– special qualities will not be affected by solar PV development	landscape has low-medium scenic quality, or special qualities are unlikely to be affected by solar PV development	landscape has a medium scenic quality and some of the special qualities may be affected by solar PV development	landscape has a medium-high scenic quality – most of the special qualities are likely to be affected by solar PV development	area has a high scenic quality (likely to be recognised as National Park/ AONB/ Heritage Coast) and the scenic qualities will be affected by solar PV development

The discussion on landscape sensitivity

4.11 Once the criteria were assessed individually, the results are drawn together into a summary discussion on landscape sensitivity for that LCT. These are shown in the individual assessments compiled at **Appendix 2.**

4.12 If one criterion has a particularly strong influence on landscape sensitivity this is drawn out in the discussion (an example might be a landscape with prominent/ highly visible slopes, or particularly high levels of tranquillity or remoteness).

4.13 In any given LCT, there may be criteria that produce conflicting scores. For example, a landscape with a very small-scale field pattern and with a high sense of enclosure might score lower sensitivity for 'sense of enclosure/openness' but higher for 'field pattern and scale'. These issues are brought out in the overall discussion on landscape sensitivity.

4.14 As with all analyses based upon data and information which is to a greater or lesser extent subjective, some caution is required in its interpretation. This is particularly to avoid the suggestion that certain landscape features or qualities can be absolutely associated with certain sensitivities – the reality is that landscape sensitivity is the result of a complex interplay of often unequally weighted variables (or 'criteria'). This issue is addressed in a summary of overall landscape sensitivity given for each LCT – which considers how the criteria-based assessments combine to give an overall sensitivity result for different scales of development within an LCT. Because of the complexity of the criteria, and their subtle interrelationships with each other, a numeric scoring system has purposefully not been used in expressing sensitivity. The assessments are based on professional judgement, taking account of the interplay between criteria, as well as those which might be more important [to landscape character] in a particular LCT.

Judging landscape sensitivity to different sizes of development

4.15 The next stage of the assessment results in making an overall judgement on landscape sensitivity to different scales of solar PV development.

4.16 Sensitivity is judged on a five-point scale as shown in **Table 4.6** below. These sensitivity ratings can apply to any landscape in England – they are not specific to Mid Devon.

Table 4.6: Sensitivity levels and definitions

Sensitivity Level	Definition
High (H)	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are highly sensitive to change from the type and scale of renewable energy being assessed.
Moderate-High (M-H)	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change from the type and scale of renewable energy being assessed.
Moderate (M)	Some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change from the type and scale of renewable energy being assessed.
Low-Moderate (L-M)	Few of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change from the type and scale of renewable energy being assessed.
Low (L)	Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are robust and are less likely to be adversely affected by the type and scale of renewable energy development being assessed.

Presentation of results

4.17 The full landscape sensitivity assessments for each of the landscape character types (LCTs) found in Mid Devon are presented in tabular format in **Appendix 2**. The tables provide:

- A summary description of the LCT against each of the assessment criteria, giving a landscape sensitivity assessment 'score' for each (on the coloured five-point scale as set out in **Table 4.6** above).
- An overall discussion on landscape sensitivity for the LCT.
- Sensitivity ratings for different scales of development (different sized areas of panels for solar PV development).
- A list of key sensitive features/characteristics within the LCT (this comes at the top of the subsequent 'Guidance' section provided at the end of each assessment).

4.18 A summary of the results of the landscape sensitivity assessment is presented and mapped in the next chapter (**Chapter 5**).

5 Strategic patterns of landscape sensitivity across Mid Devon

Introduction

5.1 This chapter provides a summary of the overall landscape sensitivity results for solar PV development across the Landscape Character Types within Mid Devon District. The full assessment matrices provided in **Appendix 2** (which contain specific information relating to different sensitivities within the LCTs) should always be referred to when interpreting the summary tables.

Observations on landscape sensitivity across Mid Devon

5.2 The results of the landscape sensitivity assessment are set out in **Table 5.1**. These overall results are also mapped in **Figures 5.1** to **5.5** at the end of this Chapter. The aim of the maps is to show visually the results of the landscape sensitivity assessment at the LCT level; they are not intended to illustrate the visual impacts of individual solar PV developments on the surrounding landscape. That would need to be undertaken for individual schemes, aided by the use of computer generated maps of 'Zones of Theoretical Visibility' (ZTVs).

5.3 Generally the landscapes across Mid Devon are relatively small in terms of their landform scale (compared to other parts of the country), highly rural in character and frequently strongly undulating and intricate. In addition, the landscape features that characterise the area are also relatively small in scale, such as historic buildings, church towers, small-scale medieval fields divided by hedgebanks, windblown trees and woodland. This results in the whole district being assessed as being highly sensitive to the largest scales of renewable energy developments – which if introduced are likely to compete with the small scale elements of the landscape that create its existing character. The sensitivity of the District's landscape therefore becomes progressively higher as you progress through the different theoretical scales of solar PV development, as indicated in **Figures 5.1** to **5.5**.

5.4 The LCTs in Mid Devon often contain areas of higher and lower sensitivity within them that vary from the overall sensitivity 'score'. It is therefore very important to take note of the content of the individual LCT sensitivity assessments and guidance in **Appendix 2** as well as the additional information provided for the relevant Devon Character Areas and general guidance on siting and design, in **Chapter 6.**

Overall patterns of landscape sensitivity

5.5 Sensitivity to solar PV development increases with size of development – most LCTs within Mid Devon District have a moderate or low-moderate sensitivity to developments less than 5 hectares in size (therefore within the 'small' or 'very small' categories). The exceptions to this are as follows:

- **LCT 1E: Wooded Ridges and Hilltops** which has a moderate-high sensitivity to small schemes due to the distinctive and prominent landform of the hills and sensitive tracts of ancient woodland.
- **LCT 2A: Steep Wooded Scarp Slopes** which is highly sensitivity to any scale of solar PV development.
- **LCT 3G: River Valley Slopes and Combes** which has a moderate-high sensitivity to 'very small' schemes and a high sensitivity to 'small' schemes due the small scale, 'secretive' character of the landscape and large areas of ancient semi-natural woodland.

- **LCT 3H: Secluded Valleys** which has a moderate-high sensitivity to very small and small schemes due to the highly tranquil nature of the valleys with prominent slopes and valued scenic qualities.

5.6 In addition, locations within the Blackdown Hills AONB have a moderate-high sensitivity to 'very small' schemes and a high sensitivity to 'small' schemes; and the small area within the Dartmoor National Park (LCT 5A) which has a moderate-high sensitivity to both small and very small schemes.

5.7 Three LCTs have a moderate sensitivity to 'medium' scale developments (5-10ha in size) due to the presence of intensive agricultural production in medium-large fields, as well as areas of modern development. These are LCT 3B: Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes, LCT 3E: Lowland Plains and LCT 5A: Inland Elevated Undulating Land (outside Dartmoor National Park). These LCT are also the exception to the overall high sensitivity of the District's landscapes to 'large' (10-15 hectare) solar schemes. Although still containing areas of high sensitivity, the three LCTs are assessed as being of 'moderate-high' sensitivity to this scale of scheme. Overall though, the relatively small scale and highly rural character of the majority of the district results in large parts of the landscape being highly sensitive to solar PV developments over 10 hectares in size.

Table 5.1: Overall results of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessments for solar PV development in the District's LCTs

Landscape Character Type	Landscape Sensitivity for Solar PV Development			
LCT 1A: Open Inland Planned Plateaux (100% in the AONB)	Very small (<1 ha)			**M**
	Small (>1-5ha)			**M**
	Medium (>5-10ha)			**M-H**
	Large (>10-15ha)			**H**
	Very Large (>15ha)			**H**
LCT 1E: Wooded Ridges and Hilltops				
	Very small (<1 ha)			**M**
	Small (>1-5ha)			**M-H**
	Medium (>5-10ha)			**H**
	Large (>10-15ha)			**H**
	Very Large (>15ha)			**H**
LCT 1F: Farmed Lowland Moorland and Culm Grassland				
	Very small (<1 ha)			**M**
	Small (>1-5ha)			**M**
	Medium (>5-10ha)			**M-H**
	Large (>10-15ha)			**H**
	Very Large (>15ha)			**H**
LCT 2A: Steep Wooded Scarp Slopes (100% in the AONB)				
	Very small (<1 ha)			**H**
	Small (>1-5ha)			**H**
	Medium (>5-10ha)			**H**
	Large (>10-15ha)			**H**
	Very Large (>15ha)			**H**
LCT 3A: Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes (11% in the AONB)	**Land outside the AONB**		**Land within the AONB**	
	Very small (<1 ha)	**L-M**	Very small (<1 ha)	**M-H**
	Small (>1-5ha)	**M**	Small (>1-5ha)	**H**
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**M-H**	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**
	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
	Very Large (>15ha)	**H**	Very Large (>15ha)	**H**
LCT 3B: Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes (2% in the AONB)	**Land outside the AONB**		**Land within the AONB**	
	Very small: (<1 ha)	**L-M**	Very small: (<1 ha)	**M-H**
	Small (>1-5ha)	**L-M**	Small (>1-5ha)	**H**
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**M**	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**
	Large (>10-15ha)	**M-H**	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
	Very Large (>15ha)	**H**	Very Large (>15ha)	**H**
LCT 3C: Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors (3% in the AONB)	**Land outside the AONB**		**Land within the AONB**	
	Very small: (<1 ha)	**L-M**	Very small (<1 ha)	**M-H**
	Small (>1-5ha)	**M**	Small (>1-5ha)	**H**
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**
	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
	Very Large (>15ha)	**H**	Very Large (>15ha)	**H**

Landscape Character Type	Landscape Sensitivity for Solar PV Development			
LCT 3E: Lowland Plains				
	Very small (<1 ha)	**M**		
	Small (>1-5ha)	**M**		
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**M**		
	Large (>10-15ha)	**M-H**		
	Very Large (>15ha)	**H**		
LCT 3G: River Valley Slopes and Combes				
	Very small (<1 ha)	**M-H**		
	Small (>1-5ha)	**H**		
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**		
	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**		
	Very Large (>15ha)	**H**		
LCT 3H: Secluded Valleys				
	Very small (<1 ha)	**M-H**		
	Small (>1-5ha)	**M-H**		
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**		
	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**		
	Very Large (>15ha)	**H**		
LCT 5A: Inland Elevated Undulating Land **(5% in Dartmoor National Park)**	**Land outside the NP**		**Land within the NP**	
	Very small (<1 ha)	**M**	Very small (<1 ha)	**M-H**
	Small (>1-5ha)	**M**	Small (>1-5ha)	**M-H**
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**M**	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**
	Large (>10-15ha)	**M-H**	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
	Very Large (>15ha)	**H**	Very Large (>15ha)	**H**

Intervisibility between LCTs

5.8 The guidance provided at the end of each LCT assessment in Appendix 2 provides reference, where relevant, to views within and between the different LCTs at the Devon Character Area level that need to be borne in mind when siting development. This outlines the importance of not considering each LCT assessment in isolation; that a full picture of landscape sensitivity needs to be drawn from all of the relevant information for the site in question.

Summary conclusions for siting and designing solar PV developments within Mid Devon

5.9 The scale and spatial pattern of development that might be accommodated within an LCT will be informed by the guidance for solar PV development set out in the individual assessments set out in Appendix 2. These judgements are based on the results of the landscape sensitivity assessment. The guidance on accommodating multiple developments is informed by the degree to which a particular Landscape Character Type is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character type[16]. However, each development proposal will need to be assessed on a case by case basis.

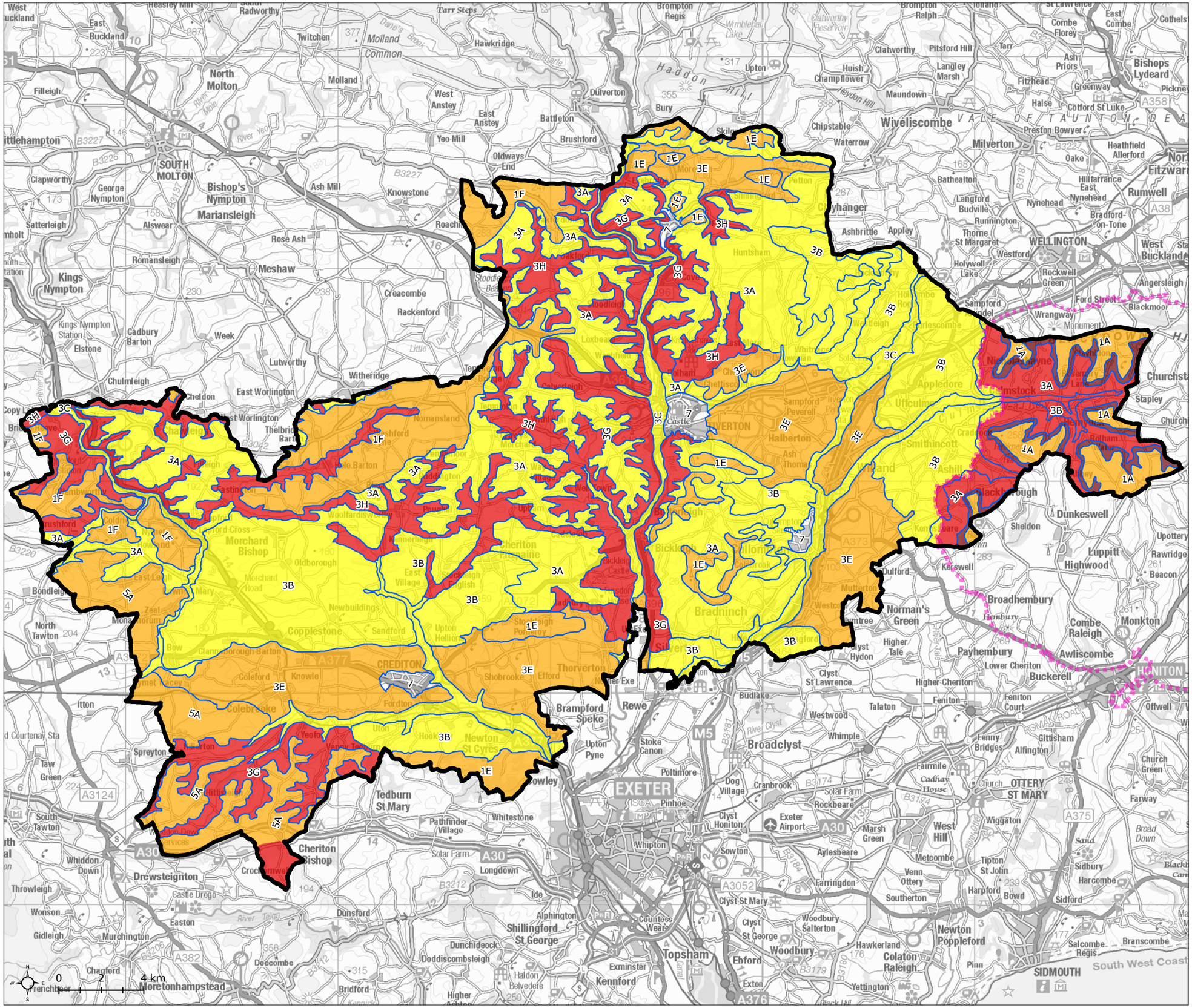
Guidance for solar PV development

5.10 For solar PV development the guidance for development included for each LCT suggests that, generally, the most suitable forms of solar PV development will be up those of up to 10 hectares in size located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes, avoiding highly visible slopes. Multiple developments within the same LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. Existing screening features should be used to screen these developments and the overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape of the LCT or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscapes of Mid Devon. Reference to the guidance provided in **Chapter 6** should also be referred to when considering landscapes with multiple solar PV developments.

Areas within the Blackdown Hills AONB and Dartmoor National Park

5.11 In the Blackdown Hills AONB and Dartmoor National Park solar PV developments should generally be limited to very occasional 'very small' scale (less than 1 ha) solar PV arrays. This is to ensure conservation of the natural beauty for which these areas are nationally recognised.

[16] The Countryside Agency and SNH Topic Paper 6: Techniques and criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity (2002) states that *"Landscape capacity refers to the degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character type. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change being proposed".*



Landscape Implications of Solar PV Proposals SPD

Figure 5.1

Landscape Sensitivity to Solar PV Development
Very Small (less than1ha)

Mid Devon District Boundary

Blackdown Hills AONB

Landscape Character Types

- 1A : Open inland planned plateaux
- 1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
- 1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
- 2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
- 3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
- 3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
- 3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
- 3E : Lowland plains
- 3G : River valley slopes and combes
- 3H : Secluded valleys
- 5A : Inland elevated undulating land
- 7 : Main cities and towns

Landscape Sensitivity to Very Small Solar PV Developments

- Low - Moderate
- Moderate
- Moderate - High
- High

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

LUC

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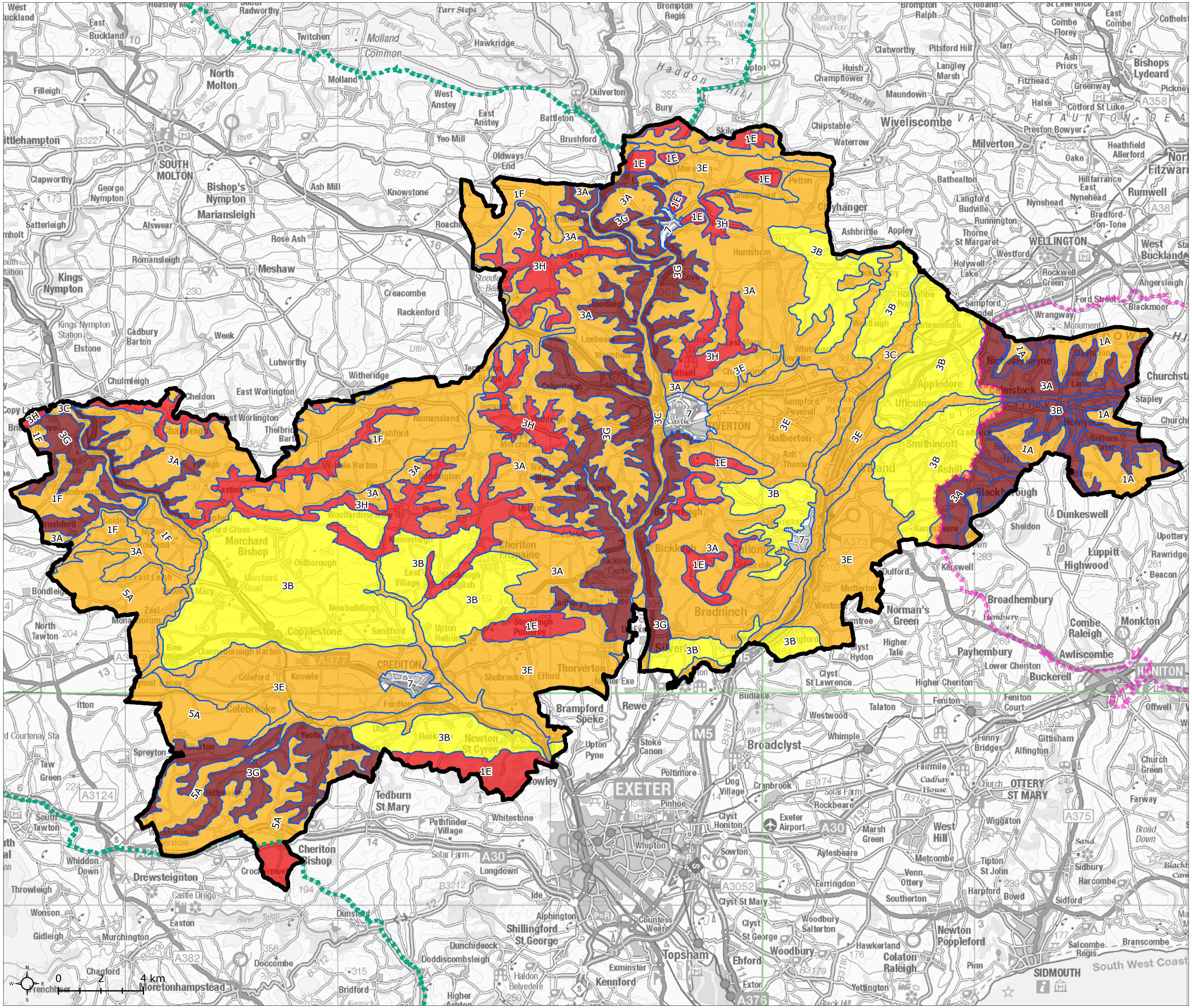
LUC LDN 6431-01_008_Fig5_1_VerySmall_SPV_LandSensitivity 26/01/2016

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council



Landscape Implications of Solar PV Proposals SPD

Figure 5.2

Landscape Sensitivity to Solar PV Development
Small (1-5ha)

Mid Devon District Boundary
Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks
Blackdown Hills AONB

Landscape Character Types

1A : Open inland planned plateaux
1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
3E : Lowland plains
3G : River valley slopes and combes
3H : Secluded valleys
5A : Inland elevated undulating land
7 : Main cities and towns

Landscape Sensitivity to Small Solar PV Developments

Low - Moderate
Moderate
Moderate - High
High

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

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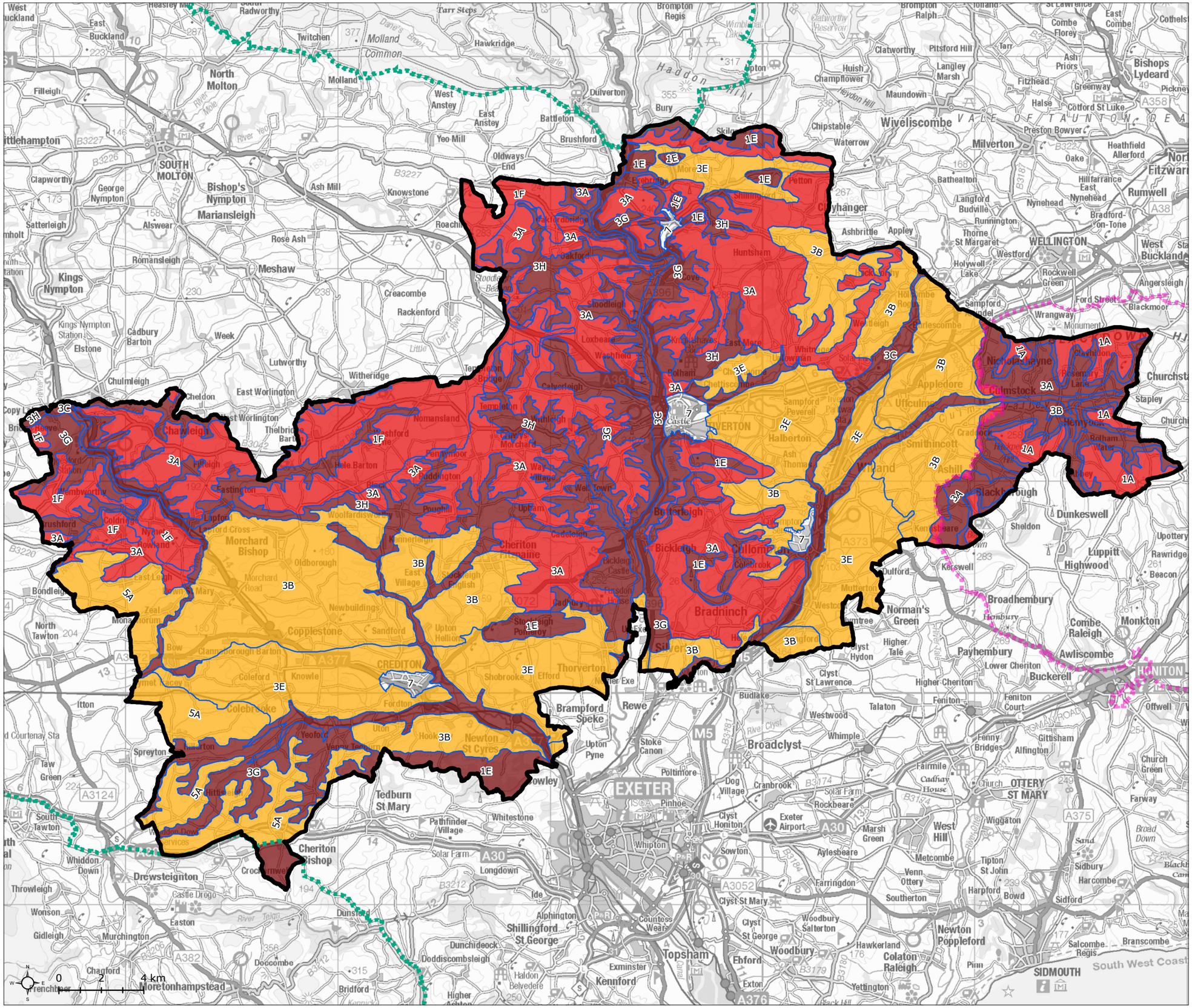

Landscape Implications of Solar PV Proposals SPD

Figure 5.3

Landscape Sensitivity to Solar PV Development
Medium (5-10ha)

- Mid Devon District Boundary
- Blackdown Hills AONB
- Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks

Landscape Character Types

- 1A : Open inland planned plateaux
- 1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
- 1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
- 2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
- 3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
- 3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
- 3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
- 3E : Lowland plains
- 3G : River valley slopes and combes
- 3H : Secluded valleys
- 5A : Inland elevated undulating land
- 7 : Main cities and towns

Landscape Sensitivity to Medium Solar PV Developments

- Moderate
- Moderate - High
- High

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

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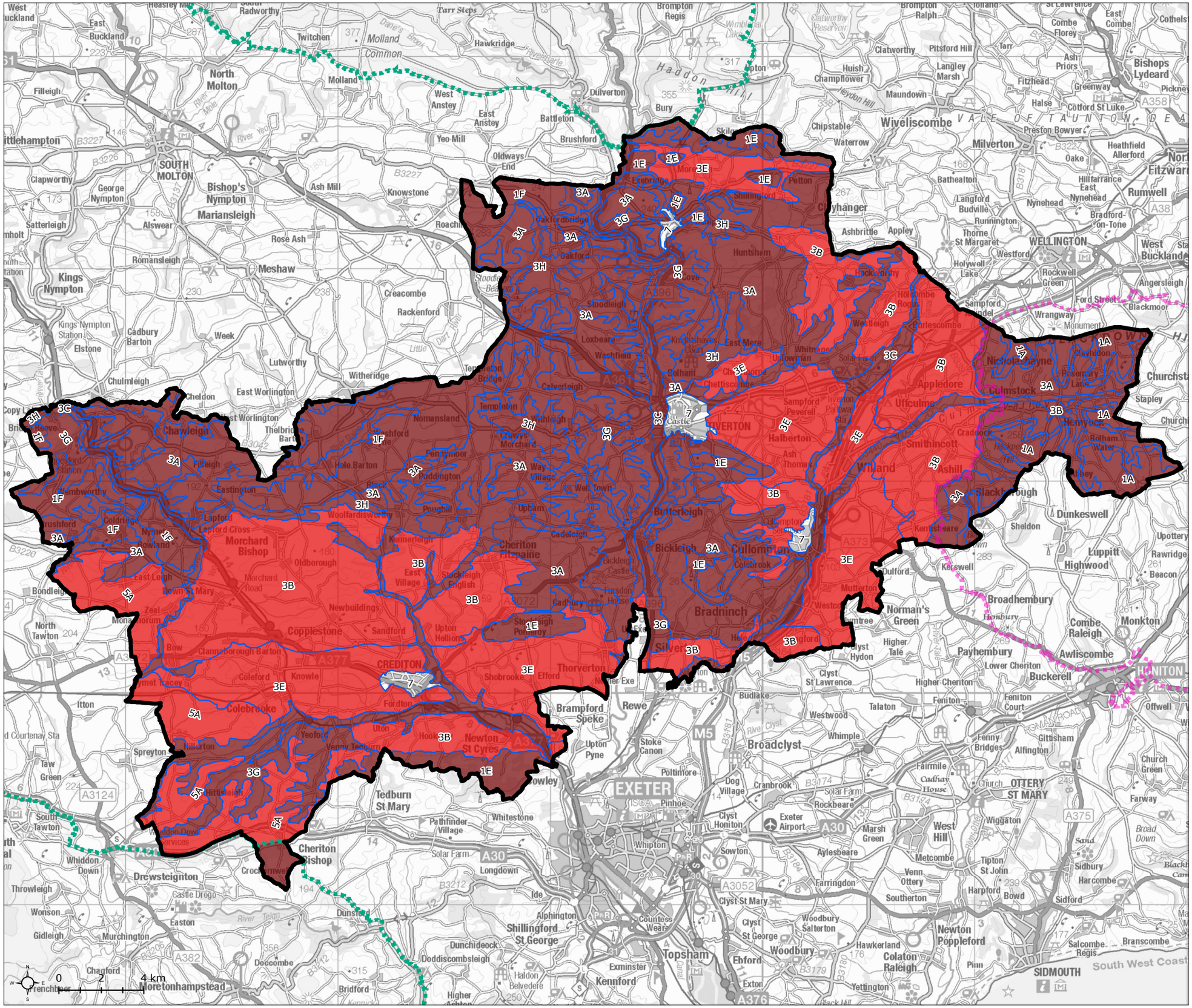

Landscape Implications of Solar PV Proposals SPD

Figure 5.4

Landscape Sensitivity to Solar PV Development
Large (10-15ha)

- Mid Devon District Boundary
- Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks
- Blackdown Hills AONB

Landscape Character Types

- 1A : Open inland planned plateaux
- 1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
- 1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
- 2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
- 3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
- 3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
- 3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
- 3E : Lowland plains
- 3G : River valley slopes and combes
- 3H : Secluded valleys
- 5A : Inland elevated undulating land
- 7 : Main cities and towns

Landscape Sensitivity to Large Solar PV Developments

- Moderate - High
- High

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

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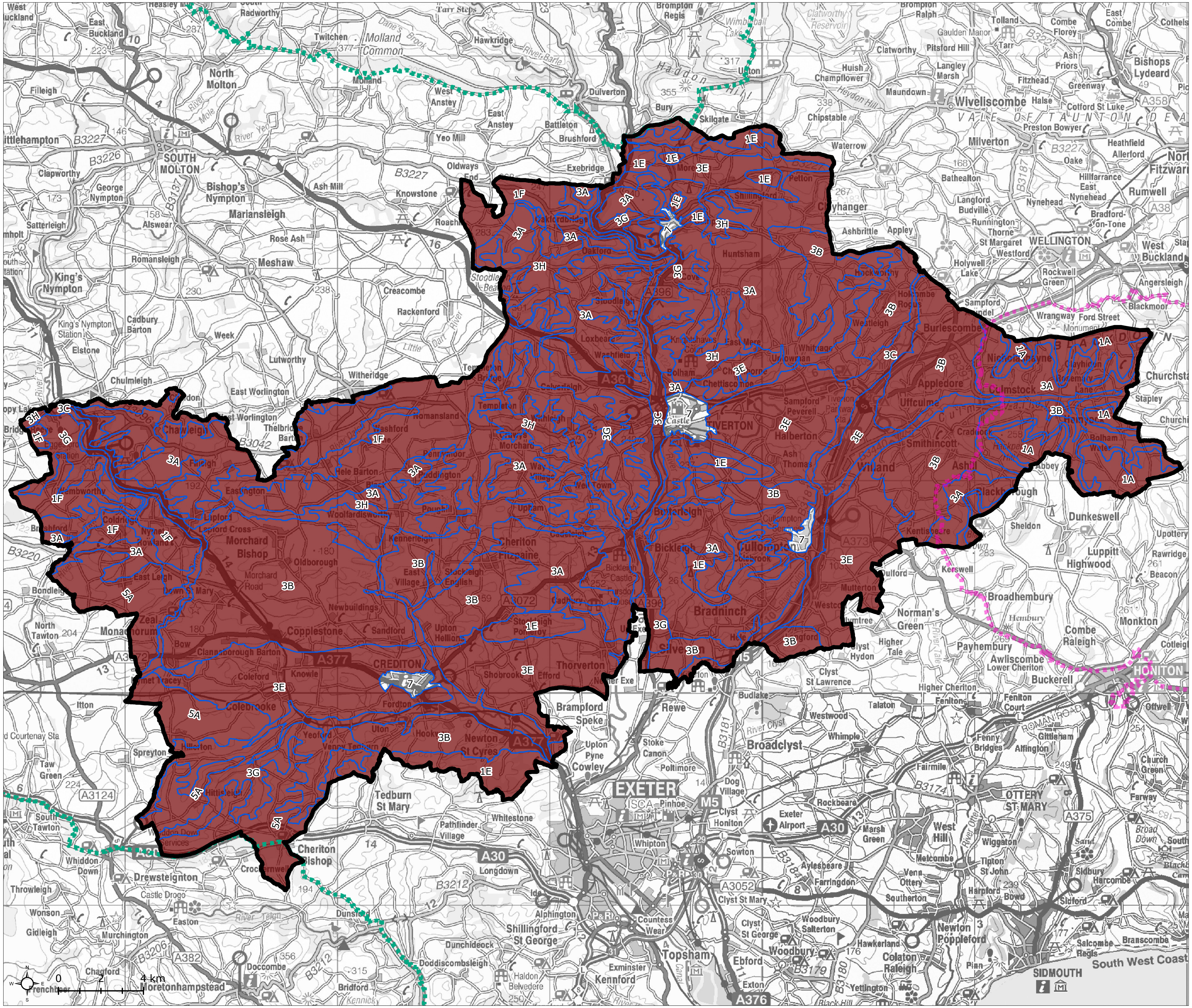

Landscape Implications of Solar PV Proposals SPD

Figure 5.5

Landscape Sensitivity to Solar PV Development
Very Large (greater than 15ha)

Mid Devon District Boundary

Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks

Blackdown Hills AONB

Landscape Character Types

- 1A : Open inland planned plateaux
- 1E : Wooded ridges and hilltops
- 1F : Farmed lowland moorland and Culm grassland
- 2A : Steep wooded scarp slopes
- 3A : Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes
- 3B : Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes
- 3C : Sparsely settled farmed valley floors
- 3E : Lowland plains
- 3G : River valley slopes and combes
- 3H : Secluded valleys
- 5A : Inland elevated undulating land
- 7 : Main cities and towns

Landscape Sensitivity to Very Large Solar PV Developments

High

Map Scale @ A3:1:175,000

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LUC LDN 6431-01_012_Fig5_5_VLarge_SPV_LandSensitivity 26/01/2016

Source: Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council

6 How to consider landscape in planning applications for solar PV developments

Introduction

6.1 This chapter provides a brief summary of the planning and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process in relation to solar PV developments. It then provides detailed guidance on how to undertake landscape and visual impact assessments (LVIAs) and cumulative landscape and visual impact assessment (cLVIAs). The chapter concludes with a suggested list of further reading, providing additional guidance on the consideration of landscape and visual issues in the context of renewable energy developments.

Consenting Process

6.2 As outlined in **Chapter 1**, energy developments with an electrical output capacity of **more than 50MW are** currently determined by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change following a recommendation by the National Infrastructure Directorate of the Planning Inspectorate. The Council will be a statutory consultee in these cases. Proposals of this scale require a type of consent known as 'development consent' under procedures governed by the Planning Act 2008 (and amended by the Localism Act 2011). It is, however, highly unlikely that any solar developments greater than 50MW will be proposed in Mid Devon.

6.3 **Solar PV developments of less than 50MW capacity** will need to apply for planning permission to Mid Devon District Council under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. **Roof top mounted solar thermal or solar PV panels** which are sited on both domestic and non – domestic buildings, or within their curtilage can be installed under Permitted Development Rights (i.e. they do not require planning permission), as long as specified limits and conditions are met. For non-domestic buildings up to 1MW can be installed under Permitted Development Rights. Full details on are contained in the detailed legislation Part 14 of Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 596, The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015[17].

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

6.4 Certain solar PV developments require Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under EIA Regulations which implement the EU's Environmental Impact Assessment Directive 85/337/EEC as amended by 97/11/EC and 2003/35/EC.

6.5 Solar PV developments are not expressly listed in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011. However, Schedule 2 of the Regulations specify that any industrial energy installation producing electricity, steam and hot water, which exceeds 0.5 hectares could potentially be EIA development. Additionally, with solar PV developments likely to be sited in rural areas, and typically on previously uncultivated land, then development listed in EIA Circular 02/99, Annex A, section A2 (such as greenhouses, farm buildings etc.) of more than five hectares may also possibly require EIA.

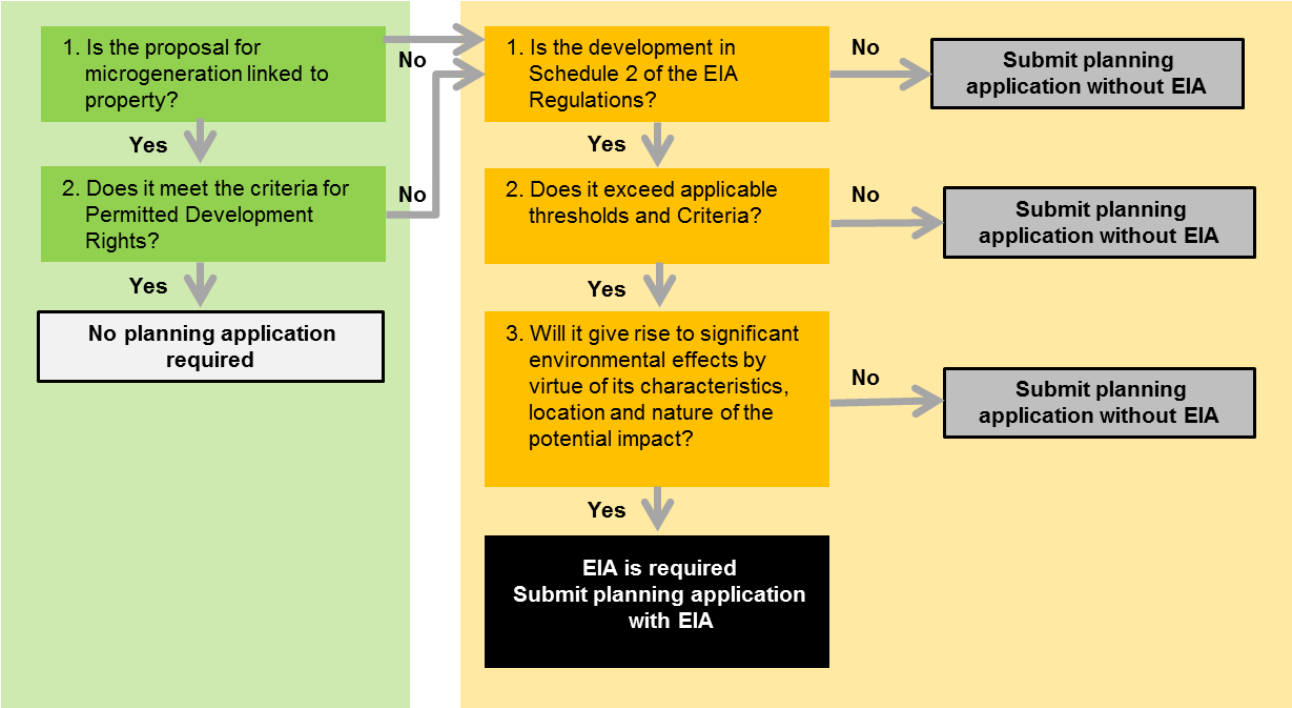
6.6 It is clear that a number of small-scale solar PV schemes will fall below the criteria for an EIA. Consultation should be undertaken with the Mid Devon District Council at the earliest opportunity to clarify if EIA is required or not. Even if an EIA is not required, in all cases some form of environmental assessment will be necessary to assess whether there are any issues and a

[17] The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/596/contents/made

landscape appraisal of the potential landscape and visual impacts of the proposal is likely to be required.

6.7 A summary of the consenting mechanisms for solar PV developments is provided in **Figure 6.1.**

Figure 6.1: Consenting Mechanisms for Wind or Solar Developments



6.8 District Network Operator (DNO) (Western Power Distribution) is responsible for establishing the connection between the substation and the grid and this forms part of a separate consenting process. The works required to connect a solar PV development to the local electricity distribution network can either form permitted development, require the submission of a separate planning application for permission, or an application for consent to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989. Developers should however provide information on the proposed route and method for the grid connection to the proposed solar PV development with their planning application (even if they do not require permission for the grid connection from Mid Devon District Council) and as part of any EIA. It is also recommended that the EIA (if required) should undertake a scoping assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed grid connection route to identify if it is likely to have any significant environmental effects.

Guidance on undertaking Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment

Overall need/purpose

6.9 A landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) is a key part of assessing the effect of proposed solar PV developments, including as part of the EIA process. As explained above, an EIA may not be required for all solar PV developments. Nevertheless, it is likely that a landscape and visual impact assessment or appraisal (LVIA) will be required to accompany the planning application. The level of detail required will be dependent upon the sensitivity of the site and the nature of the proposal and its potential effects. Pre-application discussions with Mid Devon District Council are strongly recommended for all solar PV applications. This will provide an opportunity to agree the scope, level of detail and presentation of the LVIA, and ensure that it is based on accurate and up to date information. The LVIA should address the key landscape issues raised by the proposals, providing information that is relevant, necessary and material to the decisions to be made. All

renewable energy applications potentially affecting an AONB, National Park or the undeveloped coast will automatically require a LVIA.

6.10 General guidance on LVIA is provided in the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment's 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment'[18]. However, the following guidance sets out the type of information that could be expected to be submitted as part of a LVIA for a solar PV development in Mid Devon. In addition, LVIAs for EIA developments should comply with the scoping opinion given by the planning authority where this has been sought.

6.11 The following section sets out the required components of an LVIA, in terms of information required to submit along with a planning application.

Project description

6.12 The planning application should include a description of the project at each phase in its life cycle in sufficient detail to allow the assessment of landscape and visual effects including:

- the location, layout, orientation and dimensions or extent of all plant and structures (including plans, elevations and sections) including area of array with proposed separation buffers from hedgerows;
- a description of the scale and duration of project activities during construction, operation, and decommissioning (including method of construction and traffic generation);
- information on site access including routes for transport of panels, including any need for removal of landscape features;
- location and size of temporary lay down areas, construction compounds, materials storage, temporary fencing, foundations and site cable runs;
- excavation/levelling details and soil removal estimates (if applicable);
- plans for site reinstatement;
- number and type of PV panels (including form, frame height, materials, colour, base size and mounting type);
- details of any tracking or moving mechanisms;
- location, specification and design of any structures, roads, hardstanding or storage buildings, temporary and permanent;
- location and appearance of any signage, security features, lighting, fencing and onsite grid connection point (substation/ switchgear cabinet);
- plans for landscape mitigation measures and/or landscape enhancement; and
- plans for decommissioning (removal of panels and ancillary structures, proposals for restoration and future land management).

6.13 The LVIA should highlight those aspects of the development that are the key sources of landscape and visual change.

Baseline studies

6.14 The baseline studies should set out the existing conditions within the study area. The study area should be agreed with the planning authority. Information on land use, landscape features, landscape character and landscape designations should be provided, drawing on the Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment and Dartmoor National Park Management Plan (where relevant to the site in question). A field survey should be undertaken to supplement desk based information. A description of relevant policies and plans should also be included and the relevant Parish Plan consulted, where available, to understand local landscape values.

[18] Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, Routledge.

6.15 The landscape baseline should be evaluated in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (3rd Edition) – known as GLVIA 3[19].

6.16 A zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) should be prepared to indicate the area over which the renewable energy development may be seen. ZTVs should be used, alongside fieldwork, to identify representative assessment viewpoints. These viewpoints should be discussed and agreed with the planning authority and other stakeholders. The number of viewpoints required will vary depending on the size of the development and sensitivity of the location. Priority should be given to views from distances of less than 3km for solar PV development and from sensitive locations (e.g. residential areas, areas popular with visitors or for outdoor recreation where views may be focussed on the landscape and recognised/iconic views). If the development is visible from a protected landscape there will be a requirement for at least one viewpoint from that landscape. The purpose for selection should be recorded within the LVIA.

Mitigation

6.17 As a consequence of the assessment process there are likely to be modifications to the scheme design to minimise landscape and visual effects, particularly for larger schemes. In addition, there may be measures to prevent, reduce or offset significant adverse effects. These should be described in terms of relationship to/conservation of valued landscape features, relationship to landscape character (particularly topography, scale, landform and landscape pattern), and appearance from sensitive viewpoints and designated landscapes such as Dartmoor National Park. All mitigation measures should be described and an indication of how they will be implemented provided. A description of the main reasons for site selection and any alternatives in site design or layout would also be helpful. Please refer to the recently published GLVIA 3 for further guidance on mitigation.

Enhancement

6.18 Enhancement aims to improve the character and quality of the landscape. It may take many forms, including improved land management or creation of new landscapes or features. The NPPF (para 64) acknowledges that *"Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions"*. Landscape enhancement, as part of a proposal, will be looked upon favourably.

Description of effects

6.19 This section should systematically identify and describe the likely effects of the proposal, identifying magnitude of change as a deviation from baseline conditions. Methods should be clearly set out. The assessment should cover effects at construction, operational and decommissioning phases and should consider direct, indirect, secondary, short, medium and long term effects. Effects on landscape features/fabric, landscape character, landscape values and visual amenity should be assessed.

- Effects on landscape features/fabric should consider loss of elements (e.g. hedges, trees).
- Effects on landscape character should describe the direct changes that will occur to the character of the landscape in which the proposal is located and the indirect changes to character of landscapes from where solar panels will be visible – this should include how the renewable energy development will affect perceptions of character and how widespread and prominent the changes will be.
- Effects on landscape values should describe any potential changes in special qualities of landscapes as recorded in Devon's Landscape Character Assessment. Particular weight should be given to protecting the special qualities of protected landscapes (i.e. Dartmoor National Park), focussing on the reasons for designation referred to in their Management Plans.
- Effects on visual amenity should describe and illustrate the extent of visibility and record changes in views from the representative assessment viewpoints with reference to

[19] Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition (2013) Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.

photographs and visualisations, taking into account changes in reflectivity and potential glare under different atmospheric conditions for solar PV developments.

- Effects on settlements and individual properties should also be considered where relevant.

Assessment of significance

6.20 The significance of effects should be assessed by reference to GLVIA 3. The assessment should identify which effects are considered to be significant in the context of the EIA Regulations (for EIA development), as well as which are adverse or beneficial. Methods should be clearly set out and any assumptions clearly stated.

Presentation of the LVIA

6.21 The document should be clear and logical in its layout and presentation. It should be a balanced document providing an unbiased account of the landscape and visual effects, with reasoned and justifiable arguments. A glossary of technical terms and reference list would also be helpful. For EIA development, a non-technical summary should be provided to enable a non-specialist to understand the landscape and visual effects of the proposal – this should include a summary description of the development, the aspects of landscape character and visual amenity likely to be significantly affected, and the mitigation measures to be implemented.

Maps and illustrations to accompany an LVIA

6.22 The number of maps and illustrations may vary according to the sensitivity of the site and type of proposal. However, as a guide, the following illustrations will typically be required as part of an LVIA for EIA development (see next section for maps and figures required as part of a cumulative assessment):

- A site layout plan showing position of arrays, access arrangements, location of any compounds, and all ancillary elements for solar PV development in the context of the physical landscape fabric (this may already form part of the planning application in which case it can be cross-referenced);
- National character areas within the study area;
- Devon County Landscape Character Areas/Types and relevant Mid Devon landscape character types (distance dependent upon scale of development);
- National landscape designations and open access land within the study area;
- Local landscape designations closer to the site (distance dependent upon scale of development);
- Mapping of historic parks and gardens, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, listed buildings and Devon's cultural trails may also be relevant to the LVIA (this information may also be recorded in the cultural heritage assessment)[20;]
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility within study area or an indication of extent of visibility (including the proportion of the site which will be theoretically visible if possible, and clearly indicating distance radii from the site);
- A map showing viewpoint locations, overlaid onto the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (may be combined with above maps if relevant);
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility overlaid onto character areas and designations (likely to be more than one map);
- Photographs and photomontages/visualisations for viewpoints to illustrate the location and extent of development in the landscape, provided and reproduced at a minimum viewing distance of 30-50cm[21].

[20] The applicant should speak to the LPA to determine which features will need to be mapped and the Council can provide information on designations to the applicant.

[21] 30cm is the minimum requirement set out in Scottish Natural Heritage (2006) Visual Representation of Windfarms and Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11 – which is also applicable to solar. SNH's *preferred* requirement is 40-50cm. It is recommended that each

Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CLVIA)

Overall need/purpose

6.23 Cumulative assessment as part of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required under the EU Directive on EIA (Directive 97/11/EC amending Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment), which was implemented from 1999. It refers to *'an additional cumulative effect that is additional to the impact to be expected from the developments taken individually'* (The Council of the European Union, 1997).

6.24 The Landscape Institute defines cumulative landscape and visual effects as '*additional changes to landscape and visual amenity caused by the proposed development in conjunction with other developments (associated with or separate to it) or actions that have occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the foreseeable future*'[22]. Cumulative effects can trigger the EIA process. Even if EIA is not required, it is likely that a cumulative landscape and visual impact assessment or appraisal (CLVIA) will be required to accompany the planning application. This is particularly likely in future given the potential for multiple solar PV developments to result in cumulative effects on Mid Devon's landscape.

Differences between LVIA and CLVIA

6.25 Although both cumulative and non-cumulative landscape and visual impact assessment (CLVIA and LVIA respectively) consider the effects of a renewable energy development on views and on the landscape character of the surrounding area, there are differences in the baseline against which the assessments are carried out.

6.26 For LVIA, the baseline is the existing landscape, which includes any existing solar PV developments. This is a known baseline that can be clearly defined. For CLVIA, the baseline is to some extent uncertain, and is partially speculative. This is because renewable energy developments considered as part of the baseline should include not only those existing in the landscape, but also those which are consented but not yet built and also those in the process of being determined by the relevant planning authority. The baseline may therefore include (in addition to existing solar PV developments):

- solar PV developments currently under construction;
- solar PV developments which have been granted planning permission but are not yet constructed; and
- solar PV developments that are the subject of a valid planning application that has not yet been determined.

6.27 Schemes that are at the pre-planning or scoping stage are not generally considered in the assessment. They should only be *included "if absolutely necessary to make a realistic assessment of potential cumulative effects"*[23]. In accordance with GLVIA 3 it may also be necessary to separately consider the total and additional cumulative effects of developments. The list of schemes to include and assessment scenarios should be agreed with the Council who will need to decide what is reasonable and proportionate to request for specific applications.

Information required to be submitted as part of a CLVIA

6.28 The level of detail required will be dependent upon the sensitivity of the site, the nature of the proposal and other existing and proposed schemes, and the potential for cumulative effects. A pre-planning application meeting with the relevant LPA may provide an opportunity to discuss

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Devon planning authority establishes what the 'comfortable' viewing distances is for each Member of their Development Management Committee, and allow for this to be known by the applicant. This exercise was carried out for Devon County Council Members in 2011 and the overwhelming majority had a comfortable viewing distance of between 40-50cm.

[22] Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, Routledge

[23] Para 7.14 of the 3rd Edition Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

scope. The following presents some guidance on undertaking CLVIA of solar PV developments in Mid Devon.

Study Area and sites to be included

6.29 Across Devon, it is suggested that the CLVIA focuses on potentially significant cumulative effects and that a study area is selected to enable these significant effects to be reported. Study areas will depend on the size and location of other existing and proposed schemes within the landscape and will vary with type of landscape, but initial areas of search may be up to 10km from the proposal. All existing and proposed solar PV developments should be mapped within that area. The assessment may then focus in on 'hotspot' areas to identify likely significant effects - these 'sub-areas' might be less than 10km from the development. This will help keep the assessment proportional to the scale of the project and the nature of its likely effects

Cumulative ZTV Analysis

6.30 Creating Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTVs) for each development, and overlaying these to create a CZTV, could help indicate areas where the proposed development is predicted to be visible (either on its own, or in conjunction with other solar PV developments), and areas where other solar PV developments will be visible but the proposed development will not. This can help focus the assessment.

6.31 Applicants should assess the cumulative landscape and visual effects of different scenarios, if applicable[24]. This may include, for example, a scenario that considers the proposed development in the context of other existing, under construction and consented solar PV developments (a fairly certain scenario) as well as a scenario that considers the proposed development in the context of other existing, under construction and consented solar PV developments as well as undetermined applications (a less certain scenario).

Choice of viewpoints

6.32 A number of viewpoints should be selected to illustrate cumulative visual effects arising from the renewable energy development being assessed, in combination with other existing and proposed renewable energy developments. These selected viewpoints may be the same as, or a subset, of the main LVIA viewpoints, or they may be different. In any case they should be selected specifically to illustrate cumulative effects, including representing the worst-case. These should be agreed with the relevant LPA prior to submission of planning application and preferably at the scoping stage.

Baseline evaluation for the CLVIA

6.33 The sensitivity of the landscape and visual resource will be the same as that recorded in the LVIA. However, SNH guidance on CLVIA recommends that key routes should also form part of the cumulative assessment. If routes are included in the assessment their sensitivity will also need evaluating. Key routes should be selected with reference to guidance published by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH, 2012) and should include well used or important routes (e.g. National and Regional Trails[25] and well used tourist routes) that may be affected by cumulative effects.

Preparing cumulative visualisations

6.34 Cumulative visualisation set beneath photographs, and/or photomontages should be prepared from viewpoints to illustrate the nature and degree of cumulative change to the landscape and views. This is particularly important in cases where significant cumulative effects are predicted.

Describing and Assessing Effects

Magnitude of Cumulative Change to Landscape

6.35 The magnitude of cumulative change to landscape character is the influence the additional solar PV development will have on the character of the area which is informed by:

[24] This may be applicable if there are schemes at different stages of the planning process that may result in significant cumulative effects in conjunction with the proposed development.
[25] http://www.devon.gov.uk/public_rights_of_way

- The distance over which the development will have an influence on landscape character in combination with other solar PV developments;
- The siting or location of the solar PV development being assessed in relation to other existing and proposed solar PV developments (and their relationship to landscape character types);
- The design of the renewable energy development being assessed in relation to other existing and proposed renewable energy developments (including scale and layout of the development);
- Whether key characteristics of the surrounding landscape are affected by the cumulative impact.

6.36 It will also be important to consider the combined effect of fencing, tracks, buildings and other ancillary features of the renewable energy developments on the landscape.

Magnitude of Cumulative Change to Views

6.37 The magnitude of cumulative change to views should be described taking into account the following considerations:

- The arrangement of developments in the view, e.g. developments seen in one direction or part of the view, or seen in many directions;
- The visibility/prominence of the Proposed Development compared to the other existing and proposed schemes;
- The apparent distances, from the viewer, and between developments;
- The relationship between the various sizes and layouts of the developments;
- In the case of magnitude of change to routes (sequential effects), the relative duration of views of solar PV developments from routes.
- It will also be important to consider the combined effect of tracks on views;
- The CLVIA may also consider cumulative effect on views from settlements through use of CZTVs and visits to the settlements.

Effect on Designated Landscapes

6.38 The CLVIA should set out the implications of cumulative effects on designated landscapes within the study area – for example Dartmoor National Park and the Blackdown Hills AONB.

Significance

6.39 The assessment should identify which effects are considered to be significant in the context of the EIA Regulations (for EIA development), as well as which are adverse or beneficial.

Figures

6.40 The number of maps and illustrations may vary according to the sensitivity of the site, the nature of the proposal and other existing and proposed schemes, and the potential for cumulative effects. However, as a guide the following illustrations will typically be required as part of a CLVIA for EIA development:

- Location map for all operational, consented and application sites within the study area, presented on a 1:50,000 or 1:25,000 OS base with concentric distance bands.
- CZTV for existing and proposed renewable energy developments in combination with the proposed development (CZTVs may be particularly useful for larger schemes - more than one CZTV may be useful to show different scenarios, as set out in the guidance above).
- CZTVs overlaid onto landscape character areas, landscape designations and cumulative assessment viewpoints as relevant.
- Photographs or visualisations (comprising photomontages) of up to 360 degrees to show the proposed development in the context of other developments - annotated with site name, status (operational, permitted, application), and distance to each development, and clearly labelled to indicate how the images should be held and viewed.

References and further reading

6.41 A suggested list of further reading to provide additional guidance on considering landscape and visual issues in the context of renewable energy developments is included below.

- British Research Establishment (2013) Planning guidance for the development of large scale ground mounted solar PV systems.
- Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, Routledge.
- Landscape Institute (2011) Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment: Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11.
- Natural England (2011) Technical Information Note TIN101 Solar parks: maximising environmental benefits [http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/102004]
- Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment
- RegenSW (2010) Planning for solar parks in the south west of England
- Scottish Natural Heritage (2014) Visual Representation of Windfarms: Good Practice Guidance.
- Scottish Natural Heritage (2014) Siting and Designing Windfarms in the Landscape, Version 2.
- Scottish Natural Heritage (2012) Guidance: Assessing the Cumulative Impact on Onshore Wind Energy Developments.

Appendix 1: Character Area Summaries

Summary descriptions for each Devon Character Area with land in Mid Devon District are included in the table below for reference. This information is taken from the full descriptions available on Devon County Council's website and is arranged in descending order in terms of area falling within the district.

DCA	Devon Character Area	Character Text
DCA02	Bampton and Beer Downs	This is a remote and quiet landscape with few through-routes, and is rarely visited by non-locals, giving it a remote, peaceful, timeless quality. Steep lanes run between high hedgebanks rich with colourful flowers. The flat hilltops have a sense of airy spaciousness, with long views towards the Blackdowns to the south and east, and an almost aerial aspect over the lush, deep green woodlands of the Exe valley to the west. In contrast to the open hilltops, the valleys feel enclosed and secretive. In the south, the historic parkland of Knightshayes Court adds seasonal colour and exotic species to this pastoral Devon landscape.
DCA14	Crediton Rolling Farmland	A 'typical' Devon landscape characterised by a harmonious patchwork of fields, thick hedges, red soil, deep lanes and attractive villages. This productive, settled agricultural landscape contrasts with the looming mass of Dartmoor, which forms the southern horizon in many views, particularly from the south of the area. Views are often restricted by hedgebanks, but where they occur they are often panoramic. The landscape is diverse, with irregular, often rounded hills dissected by small but well-marked valleys, lending a small scale and intimate appearance to the landscape. The long east-west ridge of the Raddon Hills forms a distinctive landmark, particularly in views from the southern part of the Exe valley.
DCA16	Cullompton Rolling Farmland	Situated between the valleys of the Exe and the Culm, this is an area of quiet, peaceful countryside, largely undisturbed by the roads and settlements on its periphery. Its steeply undulating hills and serene valleys have seen relatively few modern changes. Sunken lanes and tracks, a colourful patchwork of hedged fields, and numerous historic farmsteads remain a part of the fabric of today's landscape, giving the area a strong sense of changelessness and time-depth, despite its proximity to Exeter. The red soils and sandstone buildings give the area a colourful and warm quality which is enhanced by the deciduous trees in hedgerows and alongside streams.
DCA24	Exe Valley	The River Exe meanders through a deep and dramatic wooded valley lined with lush oak woodlands displaying changing seasonal colours. Its side valleys are particularly quiet and secretive, with a very strong sense of enclosure. The historic town of Tiverton sits on the banks of the river, its red sandstone churches, castle, bridges, school and impressive early19th century textile mill dominant in the scene. South of Tiverton, the Exe valley landscape opens out into a patchwork of fields, woodlands and copses with a much gentler character.
DCA15	Cruwys Morchard Wooded and Farmed Valleys	A landscape characterised by its deep valleys and extensive and varied woodland, interspersed with more open, pastoral landscape. The valley of the Iron Mill Stream (a tributary of the Exe) is spectacularly deep and wooded, almost gorge-like in places. The combination of steep slopes, thick woodland, and the sights and sounds of the Iron Mill Stream create an atmosphere which is quiet, secretive, remote and isolated. The enclosed, wooded valleys contrast with the high, airy and spacious

DCA	Devon Character Area	Character Text
		pasture above. This higher land is patterned with hedges and punctuated by copses and larger woods, with long-range views in all directions, Exmoor especially catching the eye in views from the northern part of the area.
DCA17	Culm Valley Lowlands	The colourful patchwork of fields, thick hedgerows and distinctive red soils visible in this area combine to form a quintessential 'Devon' scene. The area is the 'gateway' into Devon when viewed from the major transport corridors (road and rail) which pass through it. Its sense of history as a transport corridor is apparent in the Grand Western Canal, which flows serenely through the area, crossed by distinctive bridges. Despite the presence of busy transport routes and several large settlements, the valley of the River Culm retains a peaceful atmosphere, with the tree-lined river meandering through a wide floodplain.
DCA68	Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands	A settled and farmed lowland landscape, which gives the impression of being a fertile and prosperous agricultural area. The patchwork of fields and hedgerows is characterised by red soils, a wide variety of crops and numerous orchards, giving the area a rich variety of colours and textures, particularly in spring and late summer. The tree-fringed rivers Yeo, Creedy, Culm and Exe snake in meandering courses across their wide floodplains, past historic mills, bridges and weirs, all of which contribute to the time-depth of the landscape. The numerous prehistoric barrows hint at earlier phases of the landscape's evolution. Crediton, with its historic town centre and splendid red stone parish church gives its surroundings a more developed character.
DCA67	Yeo Upland and Slopes	This is a rolling upland landscape, which sits above surrounding areas offering spectacular and extensive views into adjacent landscapes, including the Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands, Haldon Ridge, Teign Valley and Dartmoor. Although elevated it is incised by a series of river valleys (most of which drain northwards into the Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands) which creates strong variations in topography. The highest ridges and slopes are generally open providing long distance views and orientation, with linear blocks of mixed and broadleaved woodland along the small valley sides providing strong interconnections and a sense of enclosure which contrasts with the elevated ridges. This is a historically rich landscape with an intact medieval field pattern and sparse settlement comprising isolated stone farmsteads linked by ridge top lanes radiating from the nucleated village of Tedburn St. Mary. The lanes are often sunken, narrow and sinuous, lined with tall hedgebanks and mature trees. Overall the sense of tranquillity is strong. The close proximity of Dartmoor, sparse population, elevated panoramic views and intimate wooded valleys combine to give this area its sense of place.
DCA65	Witheridge and Rackenford Moor	An elevated, open landscape with long views to Dartmoor and/or to Exmoor. Within the patchwork of pastoral fields are extensive areas of rough Culm grassland and heathland. These Culm 'moors' have a strong sense of remoteness, even wildness, which is accentuated by the relative lack of settlement and the wind-sculpted trees and hedgerows; they give an impression of how large areas of Devon might have looked before agricultural improvements such as drainage, ploughing and fertilizers. The presence in the landscape of numerous clusters of prehistoric barrows adds to this sense of history and changelessness. The strong textures of plantations, beech hedgerows, heathland and grasses contrast with the smooth improved agricultural land which surrounds

DCA	Devon Character Area	Character Text
		them. Patches of colour in the landscape change with the seasons – golden, brown and green grasses, purple heather and bright yellow gorse.
DCA25	Exeter Slopes and Hills	This area has a varied topography, rising to the north-west to around 248m around Waddles Down Cross. This landscape feels elevated above surrounding areas, offering views across Exeter city and the Exe estuary as well as to Crediton, Dartmoor and Haldon Ridge in the distance. Areas of steep slopes, particularly those that face northwards, are well wooded with plantation and ancient semi-natural woodland – Stoke Wood being particularly important for recreation. Within the narrow and tightly enclosed valleys the character is more intimate. Distinctive views, strong topography, notable woodland and proximity to Exeter contribute to a strong sense of place. Despite the proximity to Exeter this landscape has a strongly rural character with increasing tranquillity and sense of remoteness in the small intimate valleys as well as further west away from the urban fringe and A30 corridor.
DCA06	Blackdown Hills	This landscape at its core comprises a central plateau landscape which is elevated, exposed and open in character and which fans out into narrow ridges at its edges where it is fringed by steeply sloping wooded greensand edges and farmed slopes which descend into river valleys. The interplay of open, elevated plateau (with its regular enclosure pattern and beech hedges, outgrown beech hedges and pine shelterbelts), the steeply sloping fringes (which are cloaked in woodland), and the farmed valleys (with small scale irregular enclosures) gives this landscape its distinctiveness. The expansive plateau and prominent beech shelterbelts, in particular, distinguish this area from the East Devon Central Ridge found further south and east. In places there is a sense of bleakness about the longer views across unbroken stretches of plateau.
DCA33	High Taw Farmland	Centred on a watershed in the very heart of Devon at the junction of numerous character areas, this typical Devon farmed landscape comprises lush green pastoral farmland, visually dominated by the brooding mass of Dartmoor to the south. Rounded hills covered in hedged fields are separated by secretive valleys where rivers meander along their tree-lined courses. There is a strong perception of time-depth, with the landscape reflecting thousands of years of human history from the Neolithic to the present day. The landscape presents a rich tapestry of medieval features, including churches, villages, farms, field boundaries and narrow lanes with ancient wayside crosses.
DCA57	Taw Valley	This is an intricate, complex and varied landscape within a dramatic valley, which contrasts with the surrounding open, elevated farmland. Woodland and slopes combine with bends and spurs in the valley to hide views onward and create constant surprises. Tightly wooded sections unexpectedly open out to display wide vistas across the valley. Around Eggesford, the steep valley sides and mixture of broadleaved and coniferous woodland is evocative of continental Europe. Elsewhere, tranquil parkland gives the valley a soothing atmosphere.
DCA12	Clyst Lowland Farmland	This is a low lying, intensively farmed landscape with a uniformity to its undulating topography except in the north where there are a couple of outliers of higher ground. The uniform topography and pattern of hedgerows and hedgerows trees mean that there are few distinguishing

DCA	Devon Character Area	Character Text
		features and this coupled with winding rural lanes results in a landscape which can feel quite disorientating. A distinguishing element of the area are 'Clyst' place names which mean 'clear water' and the numerous small steams which drain the area, along with the more prominent Clyst and Tale valleys, are defining characteristics. This is a settled landscape with a dispersed pattern of villages and farmsteads and includes modern communications and infrastructure, namely the A30 corridor, railway lines, pylons and more recently Exeter Airport. It also includes the town of Honiton.
DCA26	Exmoor Fringe	This landscape of rolling, interlocking ridges, deeply incised by river valleys and patterned by beech hedges, provides an important setting and transition to Exmoor. The upland river valleys drain southwards from the high moorland, forming deep clefts in the landscape that contain clean, fast-flowing water and are clothed in ancient oak woodlands. The Bray valley is the major landscape feature of the western part of the area; further east the valleys are shorter, steeper and narrower. Tree features and hilltop clumps form notable landmarks. The area is sparsely settled, with individual farmsteads and small hamlets and vernacular buildings that are mainly of sandstone and slate. Seen from the south, the area forms the foreground landscape to Exmoor. Seen from the north it forms a diverse and strongly patterned patchwork of fields and wooded valleys.
DCA30	High Culm Ridges	An open, elevated landscape, where the long views out make an important contribution to the sense of place. The high land of Exmoor (to the north) and Dartmoor (to the south) provide orientation, and a backdrop of seasonally-changing colour. In the north, views out to sea and across the north Devon coast lend a strong maritime influence. Views across and into the neighbouring Taw and Torridge valleys emphasise the contrast between this open farmland and the wooded, enclosed and intimate valley landscapes on either side. Skylines are very important, with clumps of trees and square church towers acting as prominent features and landscape focal points. Woodland and occasional patches of unimproved grassland contribute to the seasonally-changing colour and texture of the landscape.
DCA05	Blackdown Hills Scarp	This landscape forms a wide band of scarp woodlands and farmed slopes which are orientated east-west, and which face northwards over the Vale of Taunton. Historically this area has divided the counties of Somerset and Devon. This is a dramatic landscape that is very prominent, particularly in views from the north. It stands out from the land that surrounds it; and has considerable visual interest and texture due to its diverse land use and woodland cover. The Wellington Monument, a key landmark, is located on the north-facing slopes which are gently undulating, rising to Staple Hill. The western end of the scarp is most pronounced; to the east the slopes become broader and gentler. There is dense semi-natural woodland cover on the steepest slopes, along with patches of gorse and scrub. Vegetation patterns are often irregular, reflecting variations in the underlying landform, although in some areas these variations are masked by conifer plantations. The wet pastures associated with spring lines add further interest and texture to this landscape.
DCA40	Moretonhampstead	The landscape includes an extensive area of moorland fringe comprising rolling hills, many of which contain pockets of open heathland commons,

DCA	Devon Character Area	Character Text
	Moorland Fringes[26]	and in the west an area of distinct plateau. The plateau land is dominated by conifer plantations associated with the Kennick, Tottiford and Trenchford reservoirs, around which is a gently undulating mixed farmed landscape interspersed by belts of woodland and rough heathy grassland. Here the enclosure pattern, where it is evident, is medium to large in scale and regular in form, which contrasts with the intricate pattern of medieval and post-medieval fields further west. The landscape is sparsely settled and crossed by a network of minor lanes and there is a strong sense of history presented through a rich scattering of archaeological sites and stone crosses. The generally open character of the area in the west affords long views, including views to the high Dartmoor moorland.

[26] Please note that this Devon Character Area is referred to on Devon County Council's website as East Dartmoor Moorland Fringe.

Appendix 2: Detailed LCT Assessments

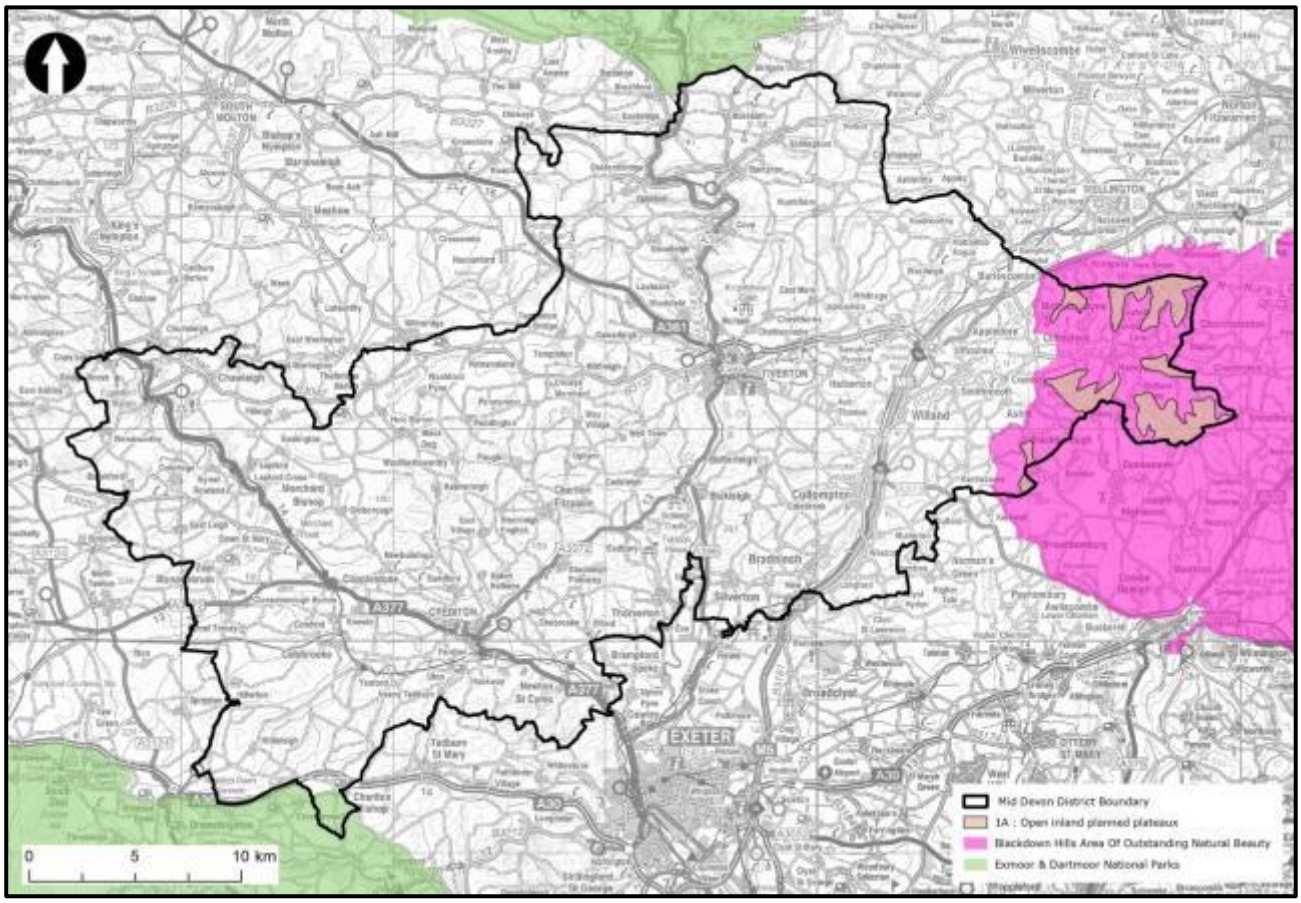
This Appendix contains the Landscape Sensitivity Assessments and Guidance tailored to each of the eleven Landscape Character Types (LCTs) found within Mid Devon District. Each document includes the following:

- A location map of the LCT as it occurs in Mid Devon.
- A list of the Devon Character Areas the LCT is found within (in the District).
- Key landscape characteristics taken from the Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment
- (2011)
- Landscape sensitivity assessment results for solar PV development
- Key sensitivities and guidance for development for solar PV development

The LCTs are arranged in numerical order, starting with 1A: Open Inland Planned Plateaux.

LCT 1A: Open Inland Planned Plateaux

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 06: Blackdown Hills

Key Landscape Characteristics[27]

- High open flat plateaux.
- A simple landscape type that has an open character with a strong sense of agrarian land use and a strong cultural history with traditional settlement patterns that are dispersed with isolated buildings and farms typical of the type.
- The main agricultural activity is the grazing of stock on pastoral improved pasture, with little arable use evident. There is some cultivation of land in rotation with ley grassland, supporting mixed farming patterns.
- Hedges are mature and thick, cut low forming medium to large scale irregular field patterns. The hedges are predominantly Beech planted on narrow earth banks and sparsely scattered hedgerow trees.
- Fields are medium to large in size, rectangular in shape, indicating 19th century enclosure of former common land, with some unenclosed areas and relic commons (now copses) and small conifer plantations.
- Some of the fields are vast with fencing as a field boundary feature between fields, suggesting field amalgamation has taken place in the past. There is a uniform appearance due to the regular field pattern and lack of woodland.
- Distinctive elements include windswept trees isolated in the landscape with some isolated discrete deciduous woodland.
- Extensive views of a large scale landscape with unified patterns where views allow, enclosed where hedgerows are high on narrow roads.
- There is a relatively sudden change to steeper valley slopes.
- This landscape tends to be devoid of much settlement with isolated houses and farms, small hamlets the dominant settlement size.
- Historically settlements have been infrequently developed in this landscape. Where they do occur it is limited to isolated farmsteads and occasional clusters of buildings usually at crossroads. There is a sense of exposure and prior to enclosure in the 19th century this would have been wild and remote.
- Traditional building materials are chert and thatch with some modern brick development representing 20th century development. Traditional farms are often of great antiquity and are listed buildings.
- Roads are straight and generally follow the plateau tops with wide grass verges with drains, with minor roads at right-angled junctions, winding and narrowing towards the plateau edge.
- Some of the most impressive and long-distance views afforded in the district across the landscape are seen from the edges of this type, although these may be obscured in places by woodland on the adjoining scarp slopes.
- The landscape is exposed to the prevailing wind and has an exposed and isolated character. Any localised enclosure by the hedge pattern has only a limited reduction to this open character, particularly as most of the hedges are laid or tightly trimmed.

12% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within South Somerset, Taunton Deane and East Devon districts.

[27] [27] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶				Higher sensitivity
Landform		L-M			
	A medium to large-scale gently rolling plateaux. The LCT comprises an elevated landform, varying between 210 and283m AOD.				
Sense of openness / enclosure				M-H	
	The elevated rolling plateaux in combination with low hedgebanks, sparsely scattered hedgerow trees and lack of modern development heightens levels of openness, although some enclosure exists where woodland is present.				
Field pattern and scale			M		
	A diverse mix of field patterns with areas of modern and post-medieval enclosure, medieval enclosures based on strip fields and Barton fields. Generally the scale of the field pattern is medium to large, although areas of medieval fields are small-scale .				
Land cover				M-H	
	Strongly agricultural landscape dominated by pasture with small areas of arable farming, conifer plantations, relict commons (now copses), small ponds and rough ground. Relatively small areas of the LCT are occupied by a disused airfield at Smeatharpe and a recreation area. There are also a few scattered farmsteads, building clusters and isolated hamlets.				
Perceptual qualities				M-H	
	This is a strongly rural landscape with some naturalistic areas (relict common land and rough ground). There is a lack of modern development, resulting in high levels of tranquillity and remoteness. These qualities are reduced in the locality around the disused military airfield and recreation area.				
Historic Landscape Character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that the majority of the LCT is made up of post–medieval enclosure (29%), modern enclosure (18%) and airfield (3%) - generally of lower sensitivity to solar PV development. However there are areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields (27%) as well as smaller areas of rough ground, medieval enclosure and Barton fields which have a higher sensitivity.				
Scenic and special qualities	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB
	All of this LCT falls within the Blackdown Hills AONB, which is nationally designated for its scenic quality. The special qualities of this part of the protected landscape, as recognised in the AONB's 'Statement of Significance', include it being isolated and unspoilt rural area relatively undisturbed by modern development; its high visual quality derived from the complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes; and long views over field patterned landscape.. Some of these may be affected by solar PV development, particularly its isolated, unspoilt rural character.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although the medium to large scale gently rolling landform and presence of hedges, woodland blocks and former airfield might indicate lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, the high levels of openness, remaining sensitive field patterns, strong agricultural and tranquil character increases the LCT's sensitive. As well as the above the high scenic quality of the area (recognised through AONB designation), and particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape patterns (which are recognised within the AONB's 'Statement of significance') increases sensitivity to solar PV development.				

Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development		
	Very Small (<1ha)	**M**
	Small (>1-5ha)	**M**
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**M-H**
	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**

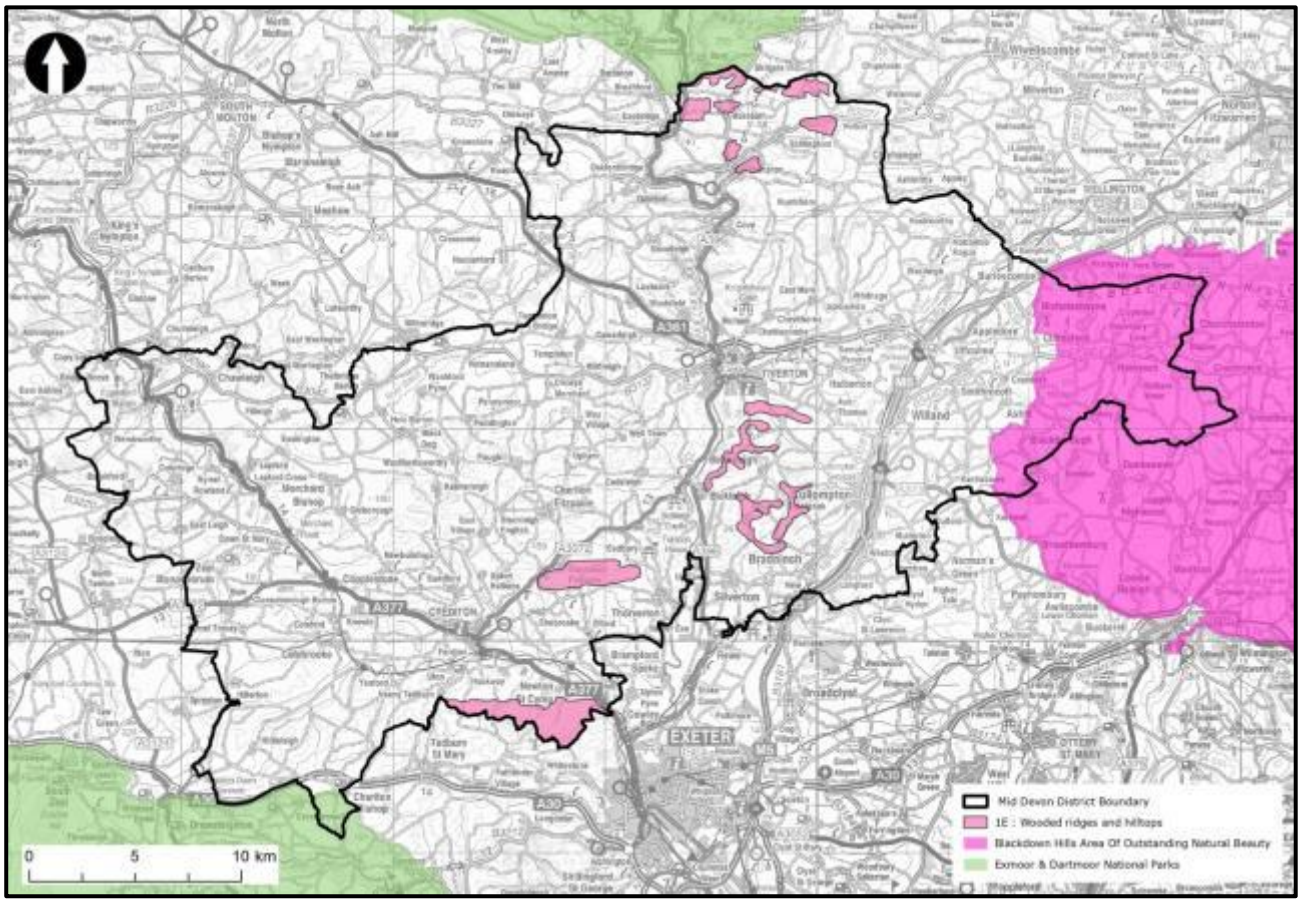
	Very large (>15ha)	H
	The sense of openness, isolation and tranquil rural character and high scenic quality (recognised through AONB designation) means that this LCT would be highly sensitive to any scale solar PV developments larger than 'small' in scale.	

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics
A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 1A Open Planned Plateaux LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below: • The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character. • Areas of sensitive small-scale medieval enclosures, rough ground and Barton fields. • Its open character affording long views across the plateaux. • An overriding lack of modern development and high levels of tranquillity and remoteness.
Guidance for Development
In Mid Devon District, this LCT falls entirely within the Blackdown Hills AONB. The landscape will be highly sensitive to anything greater than 'very small' in size (<1ha). Even small developments should be located behind existing Devon hedges or in areas of existing development so that they do not affect the open undeveloped character of the landscape. Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape (i.e. developments would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the LCT or overall change of landscape character). When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure: • Solar PV developments do not affect the historic integrity of small-scale medieval enclosures or Barton fields, and do not cover areas of rough ground. • Developments are sited so that they do not affect the open character of the plateaux. • Solar PV developments do not detract from the high levels of tranquillity and remoteness and apparent lack of modern development. • The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character, are retained.
Additional guidance specific to particular Landscape Character Areas
This LCT falls entirely within DCA 06: Blackdown Hills therefore all of the guidance above applies to this area.

LCT 1E: Wooded Ridges and Hilltops

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 02: Bampton and Beer Downs

DCA 14: Crediton Rolling Farmland

DCA 16: Cullompton Rolling Farmland

DCA 24: Exe Valley

DCA 25: Exeter Slopes & Hills

DCA 26: Exmoor Fringe

Key Landscape Characteristics[28]

- This elevated, strongly undulating plateau, covers a wide range in heights over a small area and is some of the most undulating and steepest land in the district.
- The landform of the Knaps contrasts with the hills found elsewhere in the district due to their straight-sided nature, which makes the hills look conical.
- The landform is characterised by high, rounded land that is either exposed flattish or gently rolling. The slopes of these undulations are shallow and smooth with a ridge top that is narrow and rounded in form. The narrow nature of these areas means that in the main they only flatten sufficiently to form a small-scale plateau top that is not extensive enough to be perceived as a tableland. The plateau has a number of additional fingers of ridge extending above the valley heads that have carved into the land mass.
- This steeply sloping land is sometimes characterised with streams. These springs emerge from the upper slopes forming brooks and have a meandering form.
- Deciduous woodland and coniferous plantations are often the dominant land cover as in Newton Woods, Coombland Wood and Whipshill Wood south of Newton St Cyres. Stockleigh Wood is a large-scale coniferous plantation at the south-western tip of Raddon Hills. These woodlands and plantations can be dominating features creating a strong sense of enclosure.
- Whipshill Wood and patches of woodland on Raddon Hills are ancient woodlands dating back to at least 1600 AD and are habitats described as an irreplaceable natural resource.
- Remaining land is managed as ley grassland and tends to occur on the lower gentler slopes or on the higher land close to the plateau where again the slopes are gentler.
- Fields are medium to large scale, irregularly shaped improved and cultivated. Thick trimmed hedgerows are the dominant field boundary with some hedgebanks and ditches present. Large mature trees are typically found in the hedgerows and hedgebanks.
- There are enclaves of bracken and gorse, particularly within the large-scale woodland blocks and on field margins and within hedges.
- On the upper slopes a spine hedge is common being divided into 'ribs' along its length, to form regular parallel pairs of fields bounded on the lower side by a continuous hedge circling the hills. This main ridge-hedge is frequently defined by a double-hedged track way.
- There is a general lack of buildings in this landscape, with the exception of a few isolated houses and cottages. Very few modern buildings are present.
- Straight roads following the ridge-tops are a characteristic feature of this landscape type, but winding narrow roads are dominant. Forestry tracks meander through the plantations and woods, some of which have public access. Mostly public rights of way are infrequent within the landscape, limiting views from the majority of the type.
- This is a relatively remote area with an abundance of thatched rendered cob dwellings in isolation, with some stone.
- When well-wooded there are almost no long views within or out of this landscape. However the Knaps and Raddon Hills form prominent local landmarks and afford long extensive views.
- Recreational uses associated with forestry are often evident where woodland is prevalent.

44% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within East Devon and Teignbridge districts.

[28] [28] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶ Higher sensitivity				
Landform				M-H	
	This is one of the most distinct landscapes in the District, with a distinct steep and undulating landform with small-scale flat elevated hilltops and narrow ridges. The Knaps are of particular importance due to their unique 'conical' shape. Elevation varies between 100-297m AOD.				
Sense of openness / enclosure			M		
	Relatively high levels of enclosure provided by hedgebanks / hedgerows with frequent mature trees and large areas of woodland and plantation. However, on hilltops and ridges the landscape becomes more open.				
Field pattern and scale			M		
	Fields are generally medium to large-scale, predominantly comprising regular modern and post-medieval fields with some smaller-scale Barton fields and medieval enclosures based on strip fields.				
Land cover				M-H	
	A rural farmed landscape, mainly ley grassland and extensive blocks of woodland (including important ancient semi-natural woodlands and large conifer plantations). Enclaves of bracken and gorse are found within woodland blocks, hedgerows and hillsides contributing to a varied mosaic and naturalistic character.				
Perceptual qualities				M-H	
	A remote rural landscape which has areas of perceived naturalness with low levels of development contributing to high levels of tranquillity. The LCT is densely wooded in places, adding to its naturalistic character.				
Historic Landscape Character			M		
	39% of the LCT is classified as modern enclosure and 13% as post-medieval enclosure, indicating lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development. In addition, 15% is woodland, with smaller areas (17%) of medieval enclosure based on strip fields, and Barton fields (13%), indicating a higher sensitivity. Very small areas of rough ground would be highly sensitive to the development of solar PV.				
Scenic and special qualities				M-H	
	Although this landscape is not designated at the national level for its scenic quality, the Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment recognises its scenic quality. Special qualities which might be affected by solar PV development include areas of deciduous woodland; isolated, tranquil character created through the lack of buildings and modern development; distinctive hedgerow pattern; and exceptional views of the surrounding countryside, sometimes as far as Dartmoor, Exmoor and the Exe Estuary. Part of the LCT is immediately adjacent to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include: it being a timeless landscape mostly free from intrusive development, striking views inside and out of the National Park, and its sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity. These special qualities might be highly sensitive to development within adjacent areas and should be considered in any proposals.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although this LCT contains some flatter plateau tops and areas of enclosure provided by dense woodland cover, and it includes larger scale modern and post-medieval field patterns which could indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, the presence of steeply undulating landform and prominent slopes (including the landmark Knaps and Raddon Hills), open ridges, the landscape's rural and naturalistic characteristics and high levels of tranquillity and remoteness increase sensitivity.				

Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development	Very Small (<1ha)	**M**
	Small (>1-5ha)	**M-H**
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**
	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
	Very large (>15ha)	**H**
	The small-scale strongly undulating landform, open ridges and hilltops, prominent slopes and high levels of tranquillity indicates that this LCT would be highly sensitive to solar PV developments greater than 'small' in scale.	

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 1E Wooded Ridges and Hilltops LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below:

- The distinctive landforms of steeply undulating hills (particularly the Knaps and Raddon Hills) which form local landmarks with prominent slopes.
- Areas of highly sensitive land cover including the ancient woodland at Whipshill Wood and Raddon Hill.
- The feelings of remoteness and tranquillity due to a lack modern development.
- Open nature of the ridges and plateaux tops.
- Locations within close proximity to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include striking views out of the protected landscape and a sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this LCT has moderate sensitivity to 'very small' solar PV development (less than 1ha), moderate-high sensitivity to 'small' developments (1-5ha), and a high sensitivity to any developments over 5ha.

This indicates that the landscape may only be able to accommodate 'very small' solar PV developments, and possibly 'small' developments of up to 5ha, sited on the flatter plateau tops in areas of enclosure where existing dense woodland or high hedgerows provide screening. Sites should avoid areas of steeply undulating landform, prominent slopes and open ridges (including the landmark Knaps and Raddon Hills).

The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape of the LCT and that the landscape's open character and high levels of tranquillity/ remoteness remain.

When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT, the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Development avoids visually prominent slopes and does not detract from the distinctive landforms of steeply undulating hills (particularly the Knaps and Raddon Hills) which form local landmarks.
- Development does not displace ancient woodland at Whipshill Wood and Raddon Hill.
- Development is sited so that it is well screened and does not detract from the feelings of remoteness and tranquillity and apparent lack modern development.
- Development avoids open areas so that the open character of the ridges and plateaux tops is retained.
- Solar PV development does not adversely affect the sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity associated with Exmoor National Park, or unacceptably impact on the striking views from the National Park into the district.

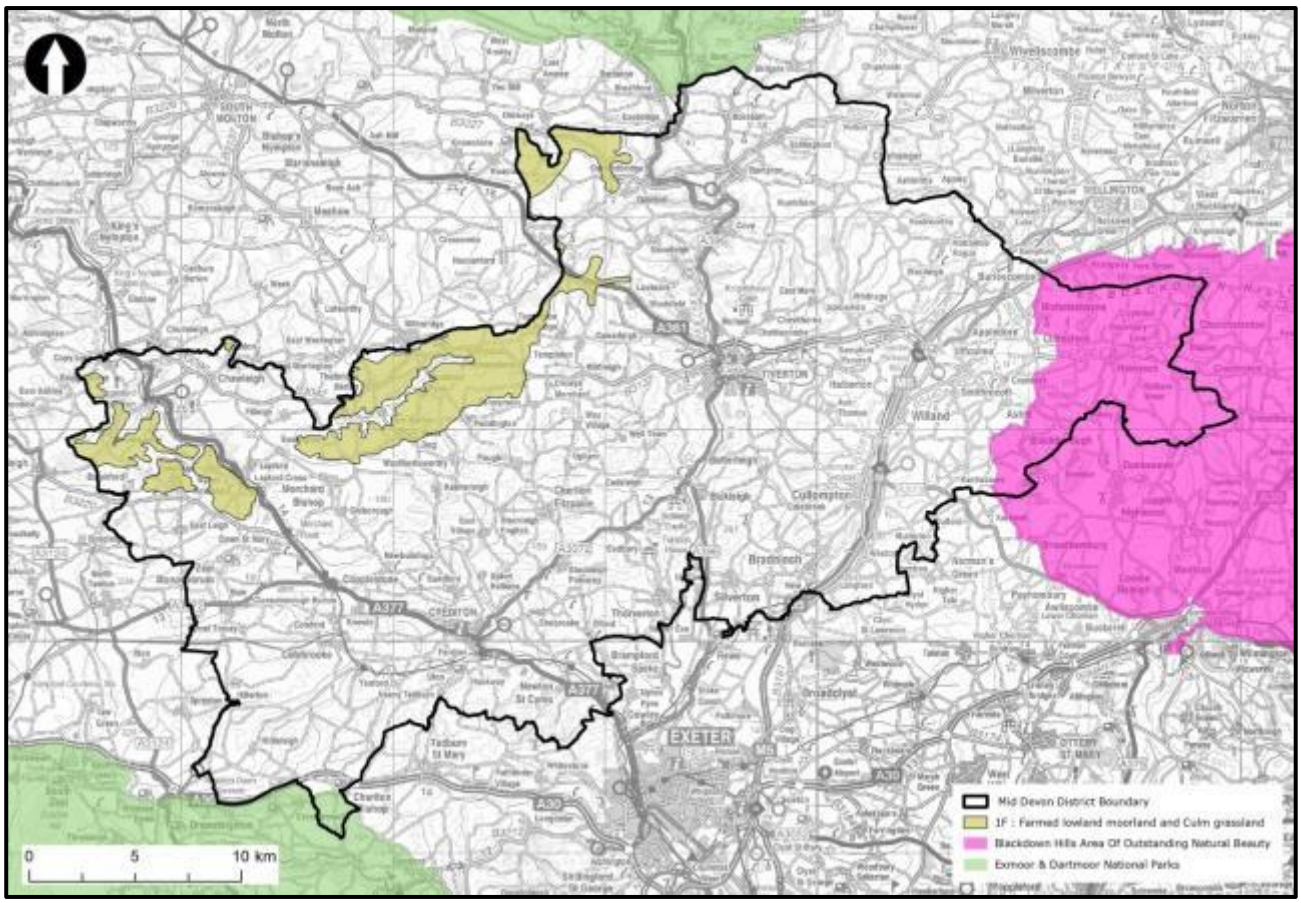
Additional guidance specific to particular Landscape Character Areas

This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present. For DCAs 02: Bampton and Beer Downs and 26: Exmoor Fringe, special attention will be required to ensure development does not adversely affect the remote,

wild and tranquil qualities of Exmoor National Park, and does not unacceptably impact on the striking views into Mid Devon from the National Park. The most open and visual prominent slopes should therefore be avoided within these DCAs.

LCT 1F: Farmed Lowland Moorland and Culm Grassland

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 15: Cruwys Morchard Wooded and Farmed Valleys

DCA 30: High Culm Ridges

DCA 33: High Taw Farmland

DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor

Key Landscape Characteristics[29]

- The land rises in a series of irregular rolling hills that are flattish, have undefined rounded peaks all of which are on a similar level.
- This is a pastoral and agrarian landscape defined by the Culm grasslands that are rich and species-diverse, disrupted in many places by intensive farming of drained and agriculturally improved land.
- Underlying landmass of Culm Measures, produces very fine soils that easily become waterlogged and have impeded drainage. These soils are difficult to farm, and have a less intensive red, ochre colour than the sandstones found elsewhere in the district.
- A prevailing damp character with streams, springs, wet ditches and rush dominated pasture are frequent features.
- The presence of ditches adjacent to many of the hedges and within road verges reflect the high levels of water impeded within the soils, that seep out into these channels.
- Small to medium scale deciduous woodlands give a strong, damp pastoral and well-wooded character to the landscape. These woodlands are invariably wet with impeded drainage.
- Relatively intact and repeated pattern of hedge and ditch with medium scale rectilinear field enclosures. The hedges tend to be low, thick, neatly trimmed with beech the predominant species and are abundant with trees.
- The regular hedgebank and hedge network were created through the late 19th century parliamentary enclosure of land, which before this time was open moorland and heathland. A few of the hedges near Witheridge Moor are dominated by single stands of beech. However, this characteristic is not widespread.
- The flattish landscape and higher ground give the area a rather unsheltered windswept appearance. Patches of bracken and gorse, as well as wind-sculpted beech trees, give an exposed feel to high locations.
- The dominant influence on the type is the heavy clay of the Culm Measures, giving rise in many places to poor wet soils, best suited to sheep and cattle grazing.
- Sparse settlement pattern with scattered farmsteads, small clustered hamlets and nucleated villages often sited on crossroads. Buildings have retained the traditional character in the main, with modern farm buildings generally fitting into the landscape, reflecting the siting of the original farms. The traditional buildings are frequently constructed from rendered cob with thatched or slate roofs, some of which are listed.
- There are a number of coniferous plantations present particularly on Witheridge Moor. These create dark, dense colours and a massive form that contrasts with the more open agrarian landscape.
- Villages and individual farmsteads are connected via a series of narrow, straight roads and lanes, with wide verges. This is an accessible landscape on foot and by small vehicle with generally a good network of lanes, metalled and unmetalled roads and public rights of way.
- Historic features include a number of hill forts and other defensive archaeological features including the remaining earthworks of the settlement at Burridge and tumuli on Witheridge Moor.
- Houses and farmsteads are often prominent in the landscape due to exposed nature of the landscape which often leads to wide, sweeping views interrupted only occasionally by wind-shaped trees and small copses.

24% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within North Devon, Torridge and West Devon districts

[29] [29] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶				Higher sensitivity
Landform		L-M			
	An elevated landform of gently rolling hills and plateaux with some with undefined rounded peaks. Elevation varies from 80m to 280m AOD.				
Sense of openness / enclosure			M		
	Higher parts of this LCT have a sense of openness and exposure due to the areas of open Culm grassland and moorland. In lower areas some enclosure is provided by thick hedgerows and blocks of woodland (copses and coniferous plantations).				
Field pattern and scale			M		
	A landscape of predominately medium-scale rectilinear fields of modern enclosure and post-medieval enclosure, as well as some smaller areas of irregular smaller-scale fields of medieval enclosure based on strip fields, Barton fields and rough ground.				
Land cover				M-H	
	A rural pastoral landscape with valued areas of Culm grassland, moorland and deciduous woodland creating a sense of naturalness, and blocks of coniferous plantation. There are few areas of built development.				
Perceptual qualities			M		
	This is a landscape with a strong rural character with sparse settlement, areas of open Culm grassland and moorland which contribute to feelings of tranquillity and remoteness. However there is some human influence including conifer plantations, the agricultural land use, the presence of the main A361 and small settlements (e.g. at Coldridge, Nymet Rowland and Nomansland).				
Historic Landscape Character		L-M			
	The Devon HLC indicates that the majority of the landscape type is made up of modern enclosure (40%) and some post-medieval enclosure (17%) - generally of lower sensitivity to solar PV development. However there are areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields (21%) – as well as smaller areas of Barton Fields and medieval enclosure, which would be of higher sensitivity. Areas of rough ground, particularly Culm grassland, would be very sensitive to solar PV development.				
Scenic and special qualities			M		
	Although this landscape is not designated at the national level for its scenic quality, the Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment describes the special qualities of this LCT. Those which might be affected by solar PV development include the Culm grasslands – dominated by wide panoramic views and of high nature conservation importance, a variety of field patterns and visual accents given by the siting of settlements; little influence of development which is key to its high quality and value as well as high levels of tranquillity and remoteness with unbroken skylines; and dense species-rich hedgerows defining the open moorland..				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although the sense of enclosure provided by hedgerows and copses, presence of larger-scale modern and post-medieval fields, and presence of some human influence in the landscape could indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, valued expanses of semi natural habitat on the higher ground (Culm grassland and moorland), smaller-scale medieval enclosures based on strip fields and Barton fields, high levels of tranquillity and remoteness and the strong rural character increase sensitivity.				
Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development	Very Small (<1ha)				**M**
	Small (>1-5ha)				**M**
	Medium (>5-10ha)				**M-H**
	Large (>10-15ha)				**H**
	Very large (>15ha)				**H**

	This LCT is likely to be highly sensitive to 'large' and 'very large' scale solar PV developments due its naturalistic and often remote character, areas of highly valued Culm grassland, and the presence of small-scale medieval and Barton fields.

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 1F Farmed Lowland Moorland and Culm Grassland LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below:

- Areas of open Culm grassland and lowland moorland which contribute to the landscape's high levels of perceived naturalness.
- Strong rural character, with high levels of tranquillity and remoteness and low levels of modern development.
- Presence of sensitive historic landscape types including small-scale medieval enclosures based on strip fields, Barton Fields and areas of rough ground.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this LCT has a moderate sensitivity to 'very small' (<1ha) and 'small' (>1-5ha) solar PV developments, a moderate-high sensitivity to 'medium' developments (>5-10ha) and a high sensitivity to developments greater than 10ha. This indicates that the landscape would be particularly sensitive to any developments greater than 5ha in size and is unlikely to be able to accommodate developments greater than 10ha. Any solar PV developments should be located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes, avoiding highly visible slopes and valued areas of semi-natural habitat and small-scale historic field patterns.

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape (i.e. developments would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the LCT or overall change of landscape character).

When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- The strongly rural, frequently remote and tranquil character of the landscape is maintained.
- Valued naturalistic habitats, including tracts of Culm grassland, heathland and wet woodland are not adversely affected.
- Solar PV development does not become a key characteristic of the panoramic views afforded from elevated ground.
- Development does not mask the pattern of small-scale medieval and historic Barton fields marked by dense species-rich hedgerows.

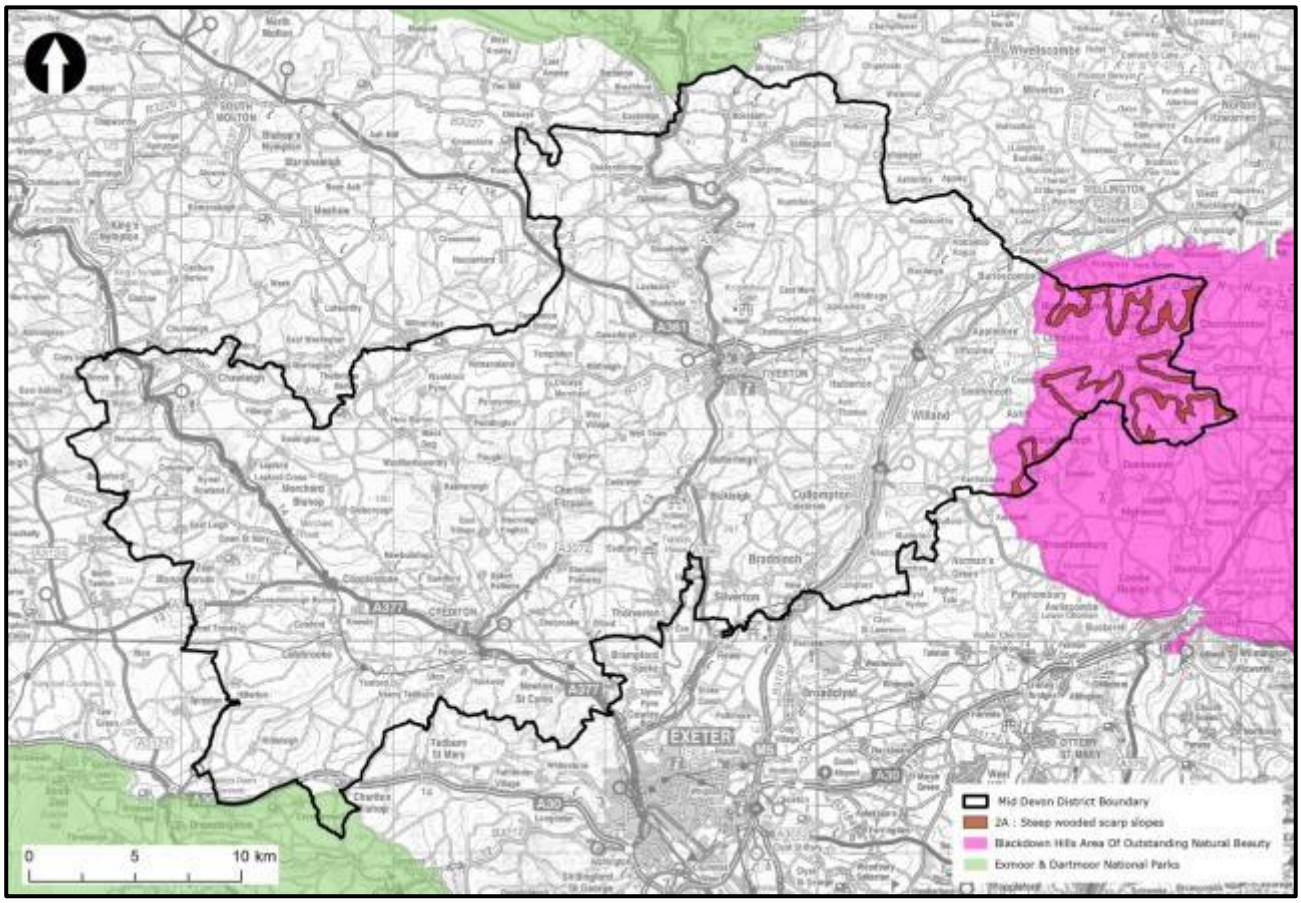
Additional guidance specific to particular Landscape Character Areas

This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present. In addition, in DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moors, special attention will be required to ensure development does not adversely affect the remote, wild and tranquil qualities of Exmoor National Park (which lies to the north), and does not unacceptably impact on the striking views into Mid Devon from the National Park.

Development that avoids visually prominent elevated hill slopes and summits is less likely to affect these views from the National Park.

LCT 2A: Steep Wooded Scarp Slopes

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 06: Blackdown Hills

Key Landscape Characteristics[30]

- The landscape forms the steep upper slopes which fall away from the adjacent tablelands plateau of the Blackdown Hills. Linear in form, this type is distinctive with a rugged surface.
- The slopes drop steeply where the clay and cherts have been undercut through the erosion of the softer underlying greensand. Over time these erosion patterns have created distinctive concave slopes, cutting away from the hilltops.
- The greensand layer underlying the landscape is deep enough for extensive springline mires to develop on the slopes. In these areas the landform is unstable and 'shifts'.
- Strong sense of dampness, with springs and areas of impeded drainage created through the geological phenomenon of a porous sponge-like layer of greensand being sandwiched between two outer crusts of impervious clay with cherts.
- Dense woodland, gorse and healthy vegetation are found growing on these steep slopes. There are long stretches of linear wet woodland, most notably surrounding Hackpen Hill, Combe Hill north of Hemyock and on Gotleigh Moor to the north of Smeatharpe.
- Some land within this type has been planted with coniferous plantations mainly in the ownership of the Forestry Commission, such as Newcombe Errish Plantation at Blackborough and on Clement's Moor on the edges of Culm Davy hill.
- Sometimes within these hanging woods the ground is frequently waterlogged and springline mires have become established. These mires are characterised by wet heathland and unimproved grassland intermixed with stands of alder carr woodland.
- The soils, where exposed in ditches and on the edges of roads are either peat-black and rich or occasionally appear as bands of pure pale greensand.
- Generally inaccessible landscape due to the steepness of its landform and its linear nature. However there are many public rights of way crossing the Blackdown Hills and in some areas the paths follow just below the plateau.
- This is a remote landscape with no settlements or hamlets, but a few isolated farmsteads located on the steep slopes below the plateau top.
- The hanging woodlands and forestry are enclosed and well-wooded and allow very few views out from the roads and track ways that traverse the slope. The roads in these locations tend to be sheltered, contained within the canopies of the surrounding trees. Views from the roads on the edges of the adjacent plateaus can be long-distance and impressive.
- The high and heathy land is highly visible in autumn when the heathland vegetation desiccates and turns bright orange typical of this type of vegetation, especially when viewed from the M5 motorway.
- The remnants of isolated farms and barns, long since abandoned, are a feature of this landscape.

18% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within East Devon and Taunton Deane districts.

[30] [30] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶				Higher sensitivity
Landform					H
	Steep and rugged landform with exposed slopes visible from their surrounding hills and from neighbouring LCTs (including within the surrounding districts). Elevation varies from 170-270m AOD.				
Sense of openness / enclosure		L-M			
	There is a high level of enclosure created by the presence of hedgebanks, dense tree cover and woodland blocks. Small areas of more open land do occur on slopes away from the main woodland blocks.				
Field pattern and scale				M-H	
	The field pattern is comprises mainly small-scale irregular fields of mixed historic origin. However there are some larger fields of more modern enclosure and areas of open semi-natural habitat.				
Land cover					H
	Land cover patterns are varied, comprising a mixture of pastoral fields and dense 'hanging' woodland. Additional variety is provided by patches of forestry, wet heathland, alder carr woodland, unimproved grassland, gorse and scrubby vegetation. There are also a few isolated farms and houses.				
Perceptual qualities					H
	This is a very remote landscape even 'wild' in places with no settlement or hamlets, little development and few roads. Due to the steep landform the area lacks modern human influences. The Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan describes the area as wild and remote due to there being very little development and human activity. Due to the steepness and extensive tree cover there is a perceived sense of naturalness.				
Historic Landscape Character				M-H	
	The Mid Devon HLC indicates that much of the landscape is comprised of rough ground (24%), which would be extremely sensitive to solar PV development. It also includes areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields (14%) and woodland (16%) which would also be of high sensitivity to solar PV development. Fields of post-medieval enclosure (16%) and some small areas of modern enclosure indicate a lower sensitivity. There are also small areas of ancient woodland (Knowles Wood), orchards, historic settlements and parks and gardens which would all be very highly sensitive to solar PV development.				
Scenic and special qualities	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB
	All of this LCT falls within the Blackdown Hills AONB, which is nationally designated for its scenic quality. The special qualities of this part of the protected landscape, as recognised in the AONB's 'Statement of Significance', include it being isolated and unspoilt rural area relatively undisturbed by modern development; its high visual quality derived from the complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes; and long views over field patterned landscape. Some of these may be affected by solar PV development, particularly its isolated, unspoilt and naturalistic character.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	The steep, rugged and highly visible landform, presence of valued naturalistic land cover (ancient woodland, alder carr woodland, heathland and rough ground), absence of modern development, strong sense of remoteness and high scenic quality result in this LCT being highly sensitive to the principle of solar PV development. The special qualities of the AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character further increases sensitivity				

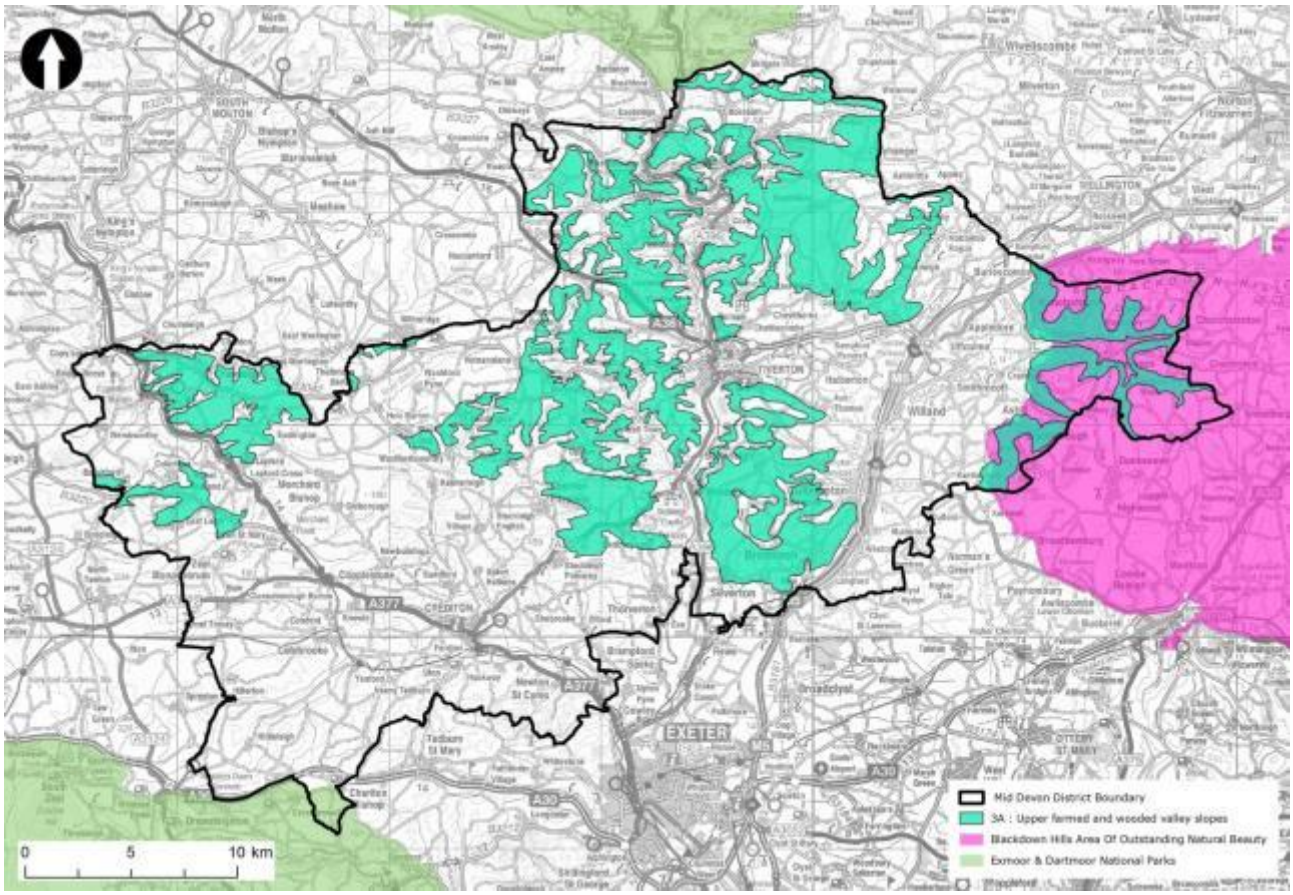
Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development	Very Small (<1ha)	**H**
	Small (>1-5ha)	**H**
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**
	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
	Very large (>15ha)	**H**
	This LCT would be highly sensitive to any scale of solar PV development due to its high scenic quality and recognised by the areas AONB designation and the steeply sloping, highly prominent landform, presence of naturalistic land cover types and very remote and 'wild' characteristics.	

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics
A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 2A Steep Wooded Scarp Slopes LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below: • The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape pattern and pictures. • The visually distinctive and prominent landform and slopes. • Rich and diverse land cover with areas of ancient woodland, alder carr woodland, wet and dry heathland and unimproved grassland. • The absence of modern development, with no hamlets and only isolated farms and houses contributing to the LCT's sense of remoteness and 'wildness'
Guidance for Development
The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this LCT is highly sensitive to all scales of solar PV development, and is therefore not likely to be able to accommodate any development.
Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas
N/A

LCT 3A: Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes

LCT Location Map



Devon Character Areas

DCA 02: Bampton and Beer Downs

DCA 06: Blackdown Hills

DCA 15: Cruwys Morchard Wooded and Farmed Valleys

DCA 16: Cullompton Rolling Farmland

DCA 17: Culm Valley Lowlands

DCA 24: Exe Valley

DCA 26: Exmoor Fringe

DCA 30: High Culm Ridges

DCA 57: Taw Valley

DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor

Key Landscape Characteristics[31]

- The tops of the hills tend to be convex and rounded forming ridges with gently dipped valley slopes, which in a few places become sheer steep slopes.
- The landscape is defined by moderately dry, fertile smooth slopes running into small-scale vales with a damp character.
- The landscape is characterised by lush and fertile land giving rise to extensive tracts of medium-scale fields of permanent pasture. Many of these grasslands are semi-improved, particularly where the land is sufficiently steep to prevent any agricultural operations that might be employed to increase productivity. Most of the pastures are grazed in summer with cows being the predominant livestock. Many fields on the slopes and flatter hilltops are cultivated for arable crops.
- On the lower slopes there is often a damp character and wet flushes and springs are both frequent and characteristic. Within the Blackdown Hills east of the district bogs are a feature of the landscape, with some fields waterlogged in winter following prolonged heavy rain. Consequently, rough pasture and smaller areas of carr woodland are also a characteristic as is wet grass heathland.
- On the steeper slopes often deciduous woodland presides. There is the occasional coniferous plantation, otherwise mostly deciduous copses. Coniferous plantations include Huntsham Wood and Mere Down at Huntsham.
- There are also patches of semi-natural vegetation including stands of gorse and bracken.
- Notable estates include Holcombe Court, Huntsham Court and Hockworthy Court. Huntsham Castle, a former settlement and Bampton (motte and bailey) Castle are Scheduled Ancient Monuments and important landmarks within the type.
- Beech hedgerows are well-managed and dense bounding regularly shaped, medium to large-scale enclosures of pasture. Trees are abundant in hedgebanks and hedgerows, and mature specimens are often present within centres of fields.
- Ridge-top hedgebanks that run along the highest ground with field compartments dropping away from the ridge, separate the landform into regular fields. Some of these boundaries are of great antiquity and often form parish boundaries. Many of these hilltop hedges are historically formed trackways with parallel hedges defining their routes.
- There are extensive conservation areas covering the historic cores of many of the villages and settlements found within this landscape. There are a high number of listed buildings, with some traditional farmsteads being intact and displaying fine examples of traditional Devon longhouses, linhays, barns and cobb or stone walls.
- The isolated farms, rural cottages and farm buildings are located on the hillsides and tend to be visually prominent in the landscape. They are often connected by tracks or lanes which add to the simple and repeated patterns. Larger settlements are connected by winding, bending narrow roads.
- There are a number of long-distance views from one hilltop to another in this landscape.
- Roads are generally absent from the slopes, being sited in the main on the hilltops, where they cross the gentler slopes.
- The hilltop enclosures tend to be more regular in shape and form and are characteristic of late 19th century parliamentary enclosures. Some of this late enclosure land was formerly managed as open heathland and down, as reflected in hill and place names, as Mere, Beer and Bampton Downs.

67% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within East Devon, Taunton Deane, North Devon and South Somerset Districts.

[31] [31] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity		▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶		Higher sensitivity
Landform			M		
	Rolling landform of hills, ridges and valleys with hidden areas as well as some highly visible steep slopes.				
Sense of openness / enclosure			M		
	Devon hedges and woodland provide enclosure. However, higher slopes and hill tops are more open with sparse tree/woodland cover.				
Field pattern and scale			M		
	Medium scale irregular fields, with some larger, regular fields of arable cultivation on higher ground. Dense beech hedgerows are well managed and create a strong regular pattern across the landscape.				
Land cover				M-H	
	This LCT is a rural pastoral landscape with some areas of semi-natural land cover and isolated farms and estates. It has a mixed land cover of predominately pasture and semi-improved grassland with areas of arable crops, rough pasture, wet heathland, areas of carr woodland and woodland which contribute to the area's perceived sense of naturalness.				
Perceptual qualities			M		
	This is a landscape has a strong rural character (described as *"small, picturesque, archetypal 'Devon' farmland"* in the LCT evaluation), although it also contains some modern development and human activity.				
Historic Landscape Character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that the LCT predominantly comprises a mixture of medieval enclosure based on strip fields (36%) and Barton fields (11%), which are likely to be of high sensitivity to solar PV, whilst 29% is defined by modern enclosure (lower sensitivity). There are also further areas of medieval enclosure, as well as patches of rough ground and park/gardens likely to be of very high sensitivity to the introduction of solar PV developments. Locations within and forming part of the setting of the Grade II* Listed Knightshayes Court, north of Tiverton, would also be highly sensitive.				
Scenic and special qualities				M-H	
	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB
	Just under 11% of the eastern section of this LCT falls within the Blackdown Hills AONB, which is nationally designated for its scenic quality. The special qualities of this part of the protected landscape, as recognised in the AONB's 'Statement of Significance', include it being isolated and unspoilt rural area relatively undisturbed by modern development; its high visual quality derived from the complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes; and long views over field patterned landscape. Some of these may be affected by solar PV development, particularly its isolated, unspoilt rural character. Part of the LCT is also immediately adjacent to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include: it being a timeless landscape mostly free from intrusive development, striking views inside and out of the National Park, and its sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity. These special qualities might be highly sensitive to development within adjacent areas and should be considered in any proposals. The remainder of the area has scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. Those which could be affected by solar PV development include its organic, textured, visually interesting landscape pattern; important ancient woodland and copses; small-scale historic settlements and farms; and small, picturesque, archetypical 'Devon' farmland.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although the presence of some hidden and enclosed areas (on lower slopes), regular modern field patterns, and presence of some development/human activity might indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, the presence of visible slopes, valued				

	areas of semi-natural habitat, strong rural character, undisturbed nature of the landscape, the high visual quality derived from the '*complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes'* and the picturesque, archetypal 'Devon' farmland character increase levels of sensitivity. Lower slopes and hidden areas will be less sensitive than upper slopes that form a backdrop to views. Within the AONB the isolated and unspoilt rural character and its diversity of landscape patterns (which are recognised within the AONB's 'Statement of significance') further increase sensitivity. Areas close to the AONB are also likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).

	Land outside the AONB		Land within the AONB	
Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development	Very Small (<1ha)	**L-M**	Very Small (<1ha)	**M-H**
	Small (>1-5ha)	**M**	Small (>1-5ha)	**H**
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**M-H**	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**
	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
	Very large (>15ha)	**H**	Very large (>15ha)	**H**
	As a result of the varied landform with some visually prominent slopes, strong rural character and sensitive land cover types, this LCT will have a higher sensitivity to larger-scale solar PV developments. Areas within the AONB would be highly sensitive to anything greater than 'very small' in scale.			

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 3A Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below:

- Its strong rural character (the *'small, picturesque, archetypal 'Devon' farmland'*).
- The pastoral character of the landscape and its strong landscape pattern produced by well-managed, dense beech hedgerows.
- The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape patterns.
- Open extensive views from elevated ground.
- The historic parkland estates, including the Grade II* Knightshayes Court.
- Valued naturalistic habitats including rough pasture, wet heathland, stands of gorse and bracken and Carr woodland.
- Locations within close proximity to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include striking views out of the protected landscape and a sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that, outside the AONB, this LCT has a medium sensitivity to 'small' solar PV developments (>1-5ha), a medium-high sensitivity to 'medium' developments (>5-10ha) and a high sensitivity to developments greater than 10ha. This indicates that the landscape will be particularly sensitive to any developments over 5ha and is unlikely to be able to accommodate any over 10ha in size. Any solar PV developments should be located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes, avoiding highly visible slopes and valued areas of semi-natural habitat.

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape of the LCT (i.e. developments would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the LCT or overall change of landscape character).

Within the AONB the isolated and unspoilt rural character and its diversity of landscape patterns (which are recognised within the AONB's 'Statement of significance') make it highly sensitive to anything greater than 'very small' in size (<1ha). These should be located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes. Areas close to the AONB are also likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).

When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- The strong rural character (the 'small, picturesque, archetypal 'Devon' farmland') character of the LCT is maintained.
- The pastoral character of the landscape and its strong landscape pattern produced by well-managed, dense beech hedgerows, are retained.
- The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape patterns, are conserved.

- Solar PV development does not become a key characteristic of the open extensive views from elevated ground.
- The heritage value and setting of the historic parkland estates is conserved, including the Grade II* Knightshayes Court near Tiverton[32].
- Valued naturalistic habitats including rough pasture, wet heathland, stands of gorse and bracken and Carr woodland are not adversely affected.
- Solar PV development does not adversely affect the sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity associated with the Exmoor National Park, or unacceptably impact on the striking views from the National Park into the district.

Additional guidance specific to particular Landscape Character Areas

This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present.

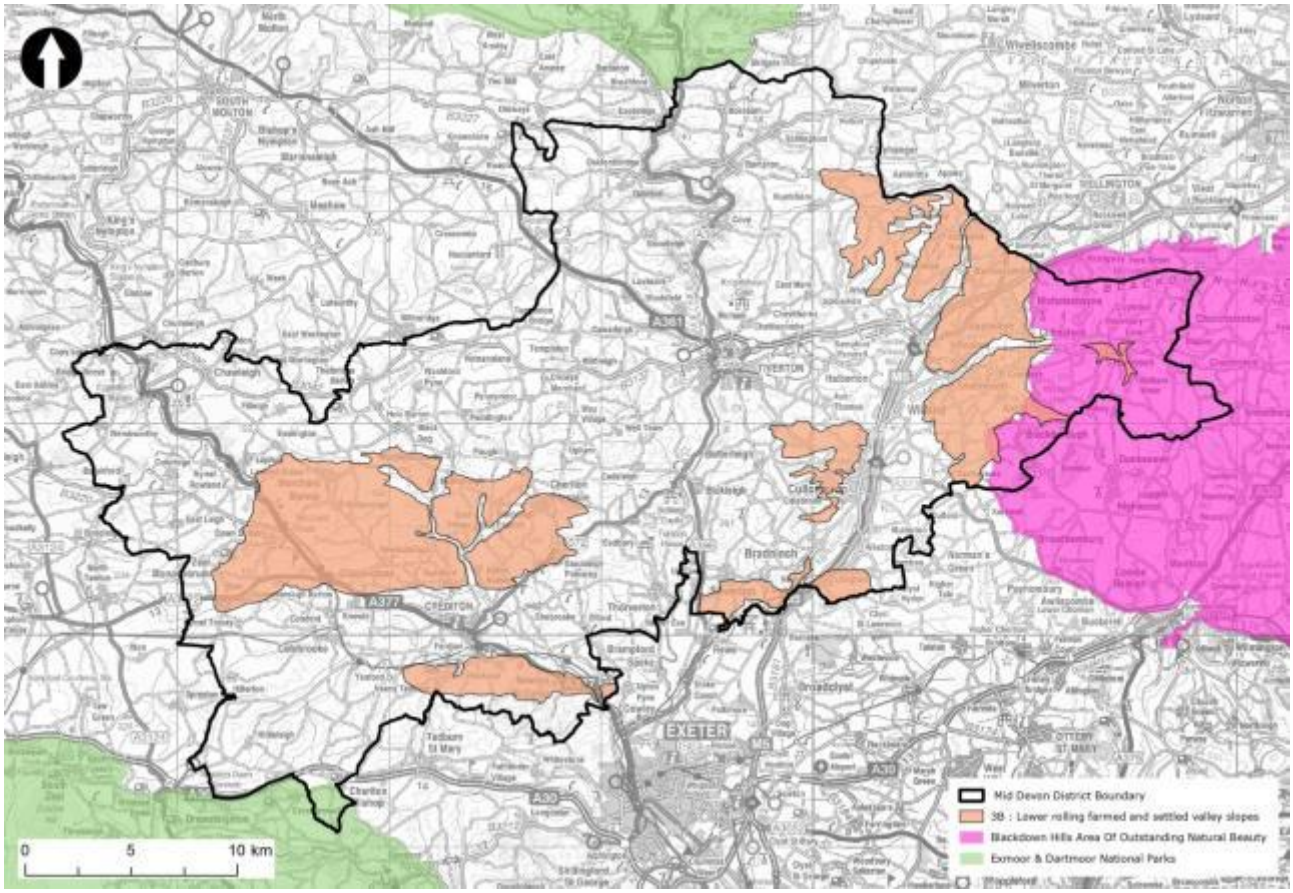
In addition, in DCA 06: Blackdown Hills, which forms part of the Blackdown Hills AONB, it will be particularly important to respect the unspoilt rural character of the landscape. This area will is highly sensitive to anything greater than 'very small' in size (<1ha).

For DCAs 26: Exmoor Fringe, 02: Bampton and Beer Downs and 24: Exe Valley, special attention will be required to ensure development does not adversely affect the remote, wild and tranquil qualities of Exmoor National Park, and does not unacceptably impact on the striking views from the National Park into the district. Development that avoids visually prominent elevated hill slopes and summits is less likely to affect these views.

[32] Please refer to The Parks Agency (2007) The Setting of Knightshayes Park and Garden. A report for the National Trust, available at: https://new.middevon.gov.uk/media/103572/knightshayes_setting_study_2007.pdf

LCT 3B: Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 02: Bampton and Beer Downs

DCA 06: Blackdown Hills

DCA 12: Clyst Lowland Farmlands

DCA 14: Crediton Rolling Farmland

DCA 16: Cullompton Rolling Farmland

DCA 17: Culm Valley Lowlands

DCA 25: Exeter Slopes and Hills

DCA 68: Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands

Key Landscape Characteristics[33]

- This is a gently rolling and strongly undulating landscape with low-lying land adjacent to the rivers in a series of irregular rolling hills.
- Characterised by a tightly rolling, medium to small scale landform. The landscape has generally been carved away by tributaries of the River Exe, Taw, Creedy and Culm to create smooth convex slopes with a uniformity of slope angle and scale of the resultant hills.
- The drainage patterns within this landscape are defining characteristics key to both the resultant landform and vegetation patterns. The sources of rivers create a lush damp character with rushes in the valleys and lower slopes. The stream channels emerging from the valley heads are small in scale and are little more than field ditches that are seasonally wet.
- Woodlands are mixed with dense scrubby undergrowth, giving a well wooded character. Where this well-wooded characteristic is found there is a strong sense of enclosure. Towards the south and west of the district, woodland cover is extensive.
- Hedgerows are well-managed and dense bounding regular and irregular shaped, medium to large-scale enclosures of pasture.
- This is primarily a pastoral fertile farmland, predominantly improved pasture with some arable. The more improved and intensively managed areas have undergone field amalgamation, disrupting the intimate scale of this landscape.
- Much of this landscape is characterised by the Red Devon Sandstone giving great soil fertility for arable farming.
- Tightly clipped wide hedgerows unify the landscape creating distinct and harmonious patterns when viewed from distant vantage points.
- There are a mixture of buildings styles present from traditional cob render, slate or thatched roofs to Victorian and modern.
- Roads are mostly winding with bends that are frequently sunken.
- Historically there are a number of important features within this landscape such as Hemyock Castle which is an important village centre landmark and Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- Notable visible features include stone walling remnants, allotments and smallholdings. Sometimes intermittent hedgerows with wooden fencing or wire and post boundary treatments are also present.
- Tree rows enclosing fields and within open fields add interesting vertical rhythms and make a varied textured landscape.
- This is a landscape with high degrees of variation in terms of the levels of visual containment. Open vistas and also framed views can be obtained from many routes. However, within the valleys the level of enclosure is high, and consequently there are very few open views within or out, due to the dense hedge network, extensive woodland and the incised form of the landform, creating intimate spaces.
- There are medium to large scale commercial and intensive farms with modern buildings and isolated farmsteads.

89% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within East Devon District.

[33] [33] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity		▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶		Higher sensitivity
Landform			M		
	An undulating landscape with hidden areas as well as some visible slopes (particularly on higher ground), situated at a range of elevations between 20m-266m AOD.				
Sense of openness / enclosure			M		
	High degrees of variation in terms of the level of visual containment: open character on upper slopes, but within the valleys the level of enclosure is high due to the dense hedge network, extensive woodland and surrounding landform.				
Field pattern and scale			M		
	The majority of the area is comprised of medium to large-scale fields which are a mix of regular and irregular shapes bound by dense well managed hedgerows, creating a strong pattern.				
Land cover			M		
	An agricultural landscape of predominately improved pasture with some areas of arable farmland, mixed woodland, dense scrubby undergrowth and rushes in valleys contributing to a varied landscape pattern. The area includes a number of small settlements.				
Perceptual qualities					
	The LCT evaluation describes this as a 'remote landscape'. However, it is a working agricultural landscape with a number of small settlements and crossed by some main roads (including the M5). In these locations levels of tranquillity and remoteness are reduced.				
Historic Landscape Character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that the LCT predominantly comprises a mixture of modern enclosure (38%) and post-medieval enclosure (8%), which are likely to indicate lower levels of sensitivity to solar PV development. Significant areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields (26%) and Barton fields (13%) would be of higher sensitivity. Small areas of estate parkland (Bridwell and Budlake) and orchard would be particularly sensitive to the development of solar PV. Locations that could affect the setting of the Grade II* Listed Killerton House, across the border in East Devon, would also be particularly sensitive.				
Scenic and special qualities			M		
	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB
	Just over 2% of the eastern section of this LCT falls within the Blackdown Hills AONB, which is nationally designated for it scenic quality. The special qualities of this part of the protected landscape, as recognised in the AONB's 'Statement of Significance', include it being isolated and unspoilt rural area relatively undisturbed by modern development; its high visual quality derived from the complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes; and long views over field patterned landscape. Some of these may be affected by solar PV development, particularly its isolated, unspoilt rural character. The areas outside the AONB are also recognised for their scenic quality, as described in the 'special qualities' section of the Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. Those which might be affected by solar PV development include its combination of regular patterns of dense hedges containing permanent, grazed pastures and deciduous woodlands; strong and distinct landscape patterns which look unified and harmonious, particularly when viewed from distant vantage points; distant views with no or little development on top of hills and a remote landscape character. The remote nature of the landscape and its distinctive landscape patterns would be particularly vulnerable to the principle of solar PV development.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although the presence of some hidden areas, high sense of enclosure in the valleys, and the presence of human activity could indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, the presence of visible slopes, undeveloped hill tops, well-wooded and pastoral character,				

	harmonious landscape pattern; and 'remote' qualities heighten levels of sensitivity. Within the AONB the high scenic quality of the area (recognised through AONB designation), and particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and its diversity of landscape patterns and (which are recognised within the AONB's 'Statement of significance') increase sensitivity to solar PV development. Areas close to the AONB are also likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).

Sensitivity to different solar PV development

Land outside the AONB		Land within the AONB	
Very Small (<1ha)	**L-M**	Very Small (<1ha)	**M-H**
Small (>1-5ha)	**L-M**	Small (>1-5ha)	**H**
Medium (>5-10ha)	**M**	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**
Large (>10-15ha)	**M-H**	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
Very large (>15ha)	**H**	Very large (>15ha)	**H**

The presence of visually prominent slopes, some sense of openness, sensitive land cover types and high levels of remoteness indicates that this LCT would be progressively more sensitive to developments greater than 'medium' in scale.

The sense of openness, isolation and tranquil rural character and high scenic quality (recognised through AONB designation) means that the parts that fall within the AONB would be highly sensitive to any scale solar PV developments.

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 3B Lower Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below:

- Visually prominent upper slopes which are frequently open in character.
- Lack of development of hill tops.
- The intimate scale and remote character of the LCT in places.
- The diverse land cover patterns, including valued areas of semi-natural habitat and woodland.
- The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape patterns.
- Sensitive historic land cover types including medieval enclosures, Barton fields, small patches of orchard and historic park and garden, including the Grade II Bridwell estate.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that, outside the AONB, this LCT has a low-moderate sensitivity to very small and small developments (up to 5ha), a moderate sensitivity to medium size developments (>5-10ha), a moderate-high sensitivity to large PV schemes (10-15ha) and a high sensitivity to developments greater than 15ha. This indicates that the any solar PV developments in this area should be less than 10ha in size and located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes, avoiding highly visible slopes and valued areas of semi-natural habitat.

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape (i.e. developments would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the LCT or overall change of landscape character).

Within the Blackdown Hills AONB the isolated and unspoilt rural character and its diversity of landscape patterns (which are recognised within the AONB's 'Statement of significance') make it highly sensitive to anything greater than 'very small' in size (<1ha). These should be located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes. Areas close to the AONB are also likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis).

When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Solar PV schemes are not located on visually prominent upper slopes, especially those that are open in character.
- Open hill tops remain free of development.
- The intimate scale of the landscape is maintained by ensuring schemes are in scale with the area in which they are located.
- Locate development on brownfield sites or near existing settlement/ development so that the most remote areas remain free of development.
- The diverse land cover patterns that characterise this LCT are maintained and solar PV development does not dominate any one area.

- Solar PV development does not adversely affect areas of valued areas of semi-natural habitat and woodland.
- Solar PV development does not adversely affect the integrity of areas of medieval enclosures, Barton fields, orchards, or historic parks and gardens, including the Bridwell estate and Killerton House (the latter in East Devon).

Additional guidance specific to particular Landscape Character Areas

This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present.

In addition, in DCA 06: Blackdown Hills, which forms part of the Blackdown Hills AONB, it will be particularly important to respect the unspoilt rural character of the landscape and diversity of landscape patterns. This area will is highly sensitive to anything greater than 'very small' in size (<1ha).

Much of DCA 14: Crediton Rolling Farmland is classified as this LCT. This area is inter-visible with DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor and views from DCA 65 will therefore need to be taken into account when planning any development in DCA 14.

The part of the LCT around Ellerhayes (within DCA 68: Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands) forms part of the setting of the Grade II* parkland estate of Killerton House, which will need to be taken into account when considering any developments[34].

The small area of this LCT that occurs in DCA 12: Clyst Lowland Farmlands is close to main roads and motorway which might lower sensitivity a little in areas close to these features.

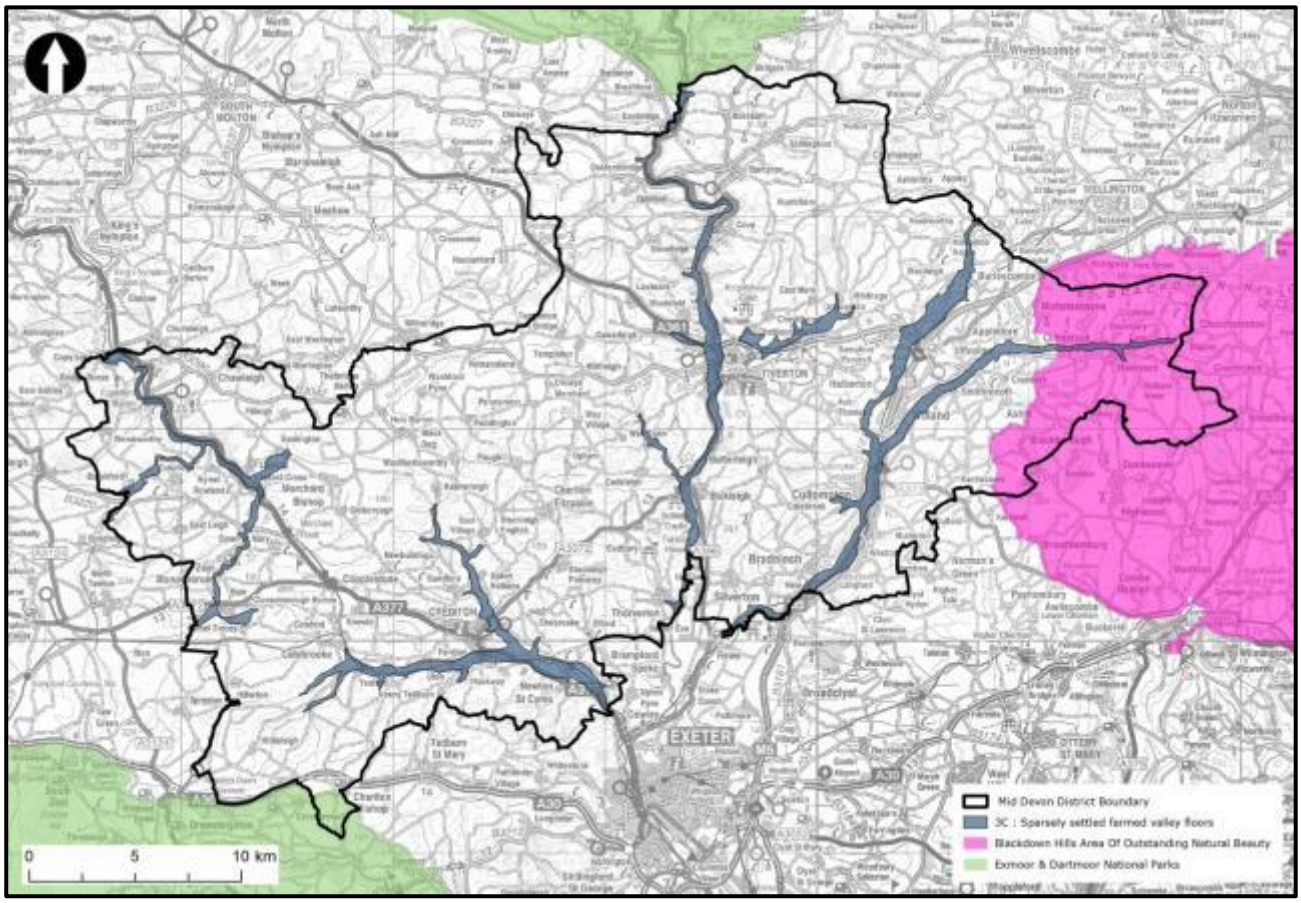
Areas of this LCT that occur in the east of DCA 17: Culm Valley Lowlands are overlooked by the Blackdown Hills and therefore siting will need to take careful account of views from the AONB.

Areas of this LCT that occur in DCA 02: Bampton and Beer Downs are particularly elevated and are therefore likely to be more sensitive than lower slopes. There will be a need to particularly avoid located solar PV on visually prominent upper slopes in this DCA.

[34] Please refer to LUC (2013) Killerton Setting Study. A report for the National Trust, available at https://new.middevon.gov.uk/media/103573/killerton_setting_study_report_.pdf

LCT 3C: Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 06: Blackdown Hills

DCA 14: Crediton Rolling Farmland

DCA 16: Cullompton Rolling Farmland

DCA 17: Culm Valley Lowlands

DCA 24: Exe Valley

DCA 25: Exeter Slopes and Hills

DCA57: Taw Valley

DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor

DCA 67: Yeo Uplands and Slopes

DCA 68: Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands

Key Landscape Characteristics[35]

- Low-lying flood plains of the lower reaches and broader parts of the river valleys. A medium to small scale landscape, characterised by relatively narrow strips of gently sloping or level land with a smooth surface topography.
- This landscape has an inherently damp character. In places this damp character becomes wet, with sinuous rivers meandering across the plains. Some streams diverge, and the split channels create wetland, and a number of water bodies.
- The soils and surface geology strongly relate to the presence of the rivers, with alluvium and valley silts, gravels and sands.
- Towards the south of the district the landscape is agriculturally improved with extensive arable cultivation in fields of a larger scale due mainly to field amalgamation.
- The woodland patterns tend to be sinuous, with small-scale scattered deciduous stands. Tree cover along the riverbanks creates a sense of spatial enclosure, with species, including alder, ash, oak and hawthorn.
- This is a pastoral landscape with locally improved grasslands within a mosaic of generally grazed and rough meadows. The field vegetation tends to be mixed with marshy areas of rushes, which become more scattered on the drier, better-drained land.
- This landscape experiences greater levels of enclosure due to woodland and the rising landform. Hedges and hedgerow trees further reduce the level of visibility particularly on the narrower sections. Where the valleys broaden towards the south, the levels of visibility and available views increase and the landscape has a more open and exposed character.
- The hamlets and roadside cottages are linked by a network of winding lanes narrowly contained by high hedges on banks. Some are sunken lanes. There are some public rights of way, however this is an inherently inaccessible and isolated landscape.
- Settlements within this landscape tend to have developed over time by spreading up onto higher land away from the rivers, rather than along their banks. Historically building materials are stone and cob with thatched roofs which have often been replaced by either slate or tile.
- There are a number of prominent land uses adjacent to the river such as paper and feed mills at Thorverton, Cullompton and Uffculme, the textile factory, school and college at Tiverton, the fish farm at Exebridge and Upton as well as the mills and industrial estate at Fordton.
- Villages and hamlets are also characteristically found alongside the rivers. Where these ribbon developments and hamlets line the rivers, such as at Eggesford on the Taw, there are small-scale pastures that have a domesticated and garden character.
- Transport routes through this landscape are highly visible. Characteristically roads follow the valley floor edge, above the risk of flood. Some of the minor roads have stonewalls or hedges separating the valley from the valley sides and there are many stone bridges crossing the rivers.
- The mainline train from Penzance to London runs through the Culm Valley within the district and the Tarka line runs through the Taw valley from Bury Bridge. Bridges, weirs and stone-faced cuttings of historic railway interest, create consistent and repeated patterns throughout this type.

52% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within North, East and West Devon, as well as Torridge and Exeter Districts.

[35] [35] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶				Higher sensitivity
Landform		L-M			
	Distinctly flat or gently sloping flood plains forming relatively narrow strips of land of a small, often intimate-scale enclosed by steep valley sides.				
Sense of openness / enclosure		L-M			
	This LCT has a significant degree of enclosure, due to surrounding valley sides which are often steep and well wooded, tree lined hedges bordering fields and roads and blocks of woodland along the stream and river corridors. There is an element of openness where the river floodplains widen, becoming more managed and less vegetated.				
Field pattern and scale		L-M			
	The majority of the LCT is defined by regular fields of a large scale. Small-scale fields also are present where historic field patterns exist to the west of Tiverton and at higher elevations.				
Land cover				M-H	
	This is a predominately rural and naturalistic landscape comprising watermeadows, carr woodland, pasture and arable farmland crossed by numerous streams and rivers. However there are some areas of settlement and urban influences.				
Perceptual qualities				M-H	
	Away from the main roads this is an inherently isolated landscape with a high sense of tranquillity. In places it is also a naturalistic landscape (including flood meadows and woodlands), although there is some modern human influence in proximity to the main towns of Cullumpton and Tiverton.				
Historic Landscape Character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that 45% of the LCT is comprised of modern enclosure and 22% of post-medieval enclosures (generally of lower sensitivity to solar PV development), with smaller areas of medieval enclosures (9%) which would be of higher sensitivity. Areas of watermeadow (9%) and woodland would be particularly sensitive to solar PV. Locations that could affect the setting of the Grade II* Listed Killerton House, across the border in East Devon, would also be particularly sensitive.				
Scenic and special qualities			M		
	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB	AONB
	A very small part of this LCT (less than 3%) falls within the Blackdown Hills AONB, recognised at a national level for its scenic quality. The special qualities of this part of the protected landscape, as recognised in the AONB's 'Statement of Significance', include it being isolated and unspoilt rural area relatively undisturbed by modern development; and its high visual quality derived from the complex patterns and mosaics of landscapes. Some of these may be affected by solar PV development, particularly its isolated, unspoilt rural character. The remainder of the area has scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. These include it being a landscape that is often perceived to be both impressive and interesting; a strong sense of harmony; its typically tranquil character, being both still and silent away from roads; high number of locally valued features present bridges and ancient settlements; both local people and tourists using the road (the A396 in particular), appreciate the tranquillity and isolation; the historic Culm valley railway; and trees and woodlands tracing the watercourses' sinuous patterns. The tranquil character, valued areas of woodland and trees and presence of important historic features would be particularly sensitive to solar PV development.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although the distinctly flat topography, presence of medium to large-scale field pattern, areas human activity and the enclosed nature of the valley floors could indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, the landscape's high levels of perceived naturalness,				

	important scenic qualities, varied land cover including areas of highly sensitive watermeadows, areas of open floodplain and high levels of tranquillity heighten levels of sensitivity. Within the AONB the isolated and unspoilt rural character and its diversity of landscape patterns (which are recognised within the AONB's 'Statement of significance') further increase sensitivity.

	Land outside the AONB		Land within the AONB	
Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development	Very Small (<1ha)	**L-M**	Very Small (<1ha)	**M-H**
	Small (>1-5ha)	**M**	Small (>1-5ha)	**H**
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**
	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
	Very large (>15ha)	**H**	Very large (>15ha)	**H**
	The relatively small-scale, intimate nature of the valley floors, naturalistic land cover and high levels of tranquillity means that this LCT would be highly sensitive to solar PV developments of medium scale or larger. Areas within the AONB will be highly sensitive to all scales of solar PV development, with very small schemes being slightly less sensitive.			

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 3C Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below:

- Strong feelings of isolation and tranquillity found away from areas of settlement, development and main roads.
- Naturalistic land cover including grasslands, watermeadows, wetlands and woodland which provide valued wildlife habitats.
- The intimate nature of the valley floors and the presence of small scale, historic fields.
- Important historic features relating to the area's ancient development and long industrial history including chimney stacks, stone walls, stone bridges and weirs.
- The special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB, particularly its isolated and unspoilt rural character and diversity of landscape patterns.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that, outside the AONB, this LCT has low-moderate sensitivity to very small schemes (less than 1ha) and a moderate sensitivity to small schemes (1-5ha). It is highly sensitive to any schemes over this size due to the relatively small-scale intimate nature of the valley floors. This analysis indicates that the landscape is unlikely to be able to accommodate any schemes greater than 5ha in size. Any proposals should be located outside the floodplain/ wetland areas, and preferably on brownfield sites or in areas with existing settlement or man-made features.

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape (i.e. developments would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the LCT or overall change of landscape character).

Within the AONB the isolated and unspoilt rural character make it highly sensitive to anything greater than 'very small' in size (<1ha). These should be located in more enclosed areas where they will not intrude into the open floodplain landscape.

When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT, the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed, particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Strong feelings of isolation and tranquillity found away from areas of settlement, development and main roads are maintained.
- Development does not result in loss of any naturalistic land cover including grasslands, watermeadows, wetlands and woodland.
- Any development respects the intimate nature of the valley floors and small scale of the landscape (including small scale, historic field patterns).
- Development does not adversely affect chimney stacks, stone walls, stone bridges and weirs that represent the long industrial history associated with the LCT.

Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas

This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present.

In addition, in DCA 06: Blackdown Hills, which forms part of the Blackdown Hills AONB. Here the landscape will be highly sensitive to anything other than very small developments located in enclosed areas away from the open floodplain where they will not affect the unspoilt rural character of the landscape and diversity of landscape patterns that exist in the AONB.

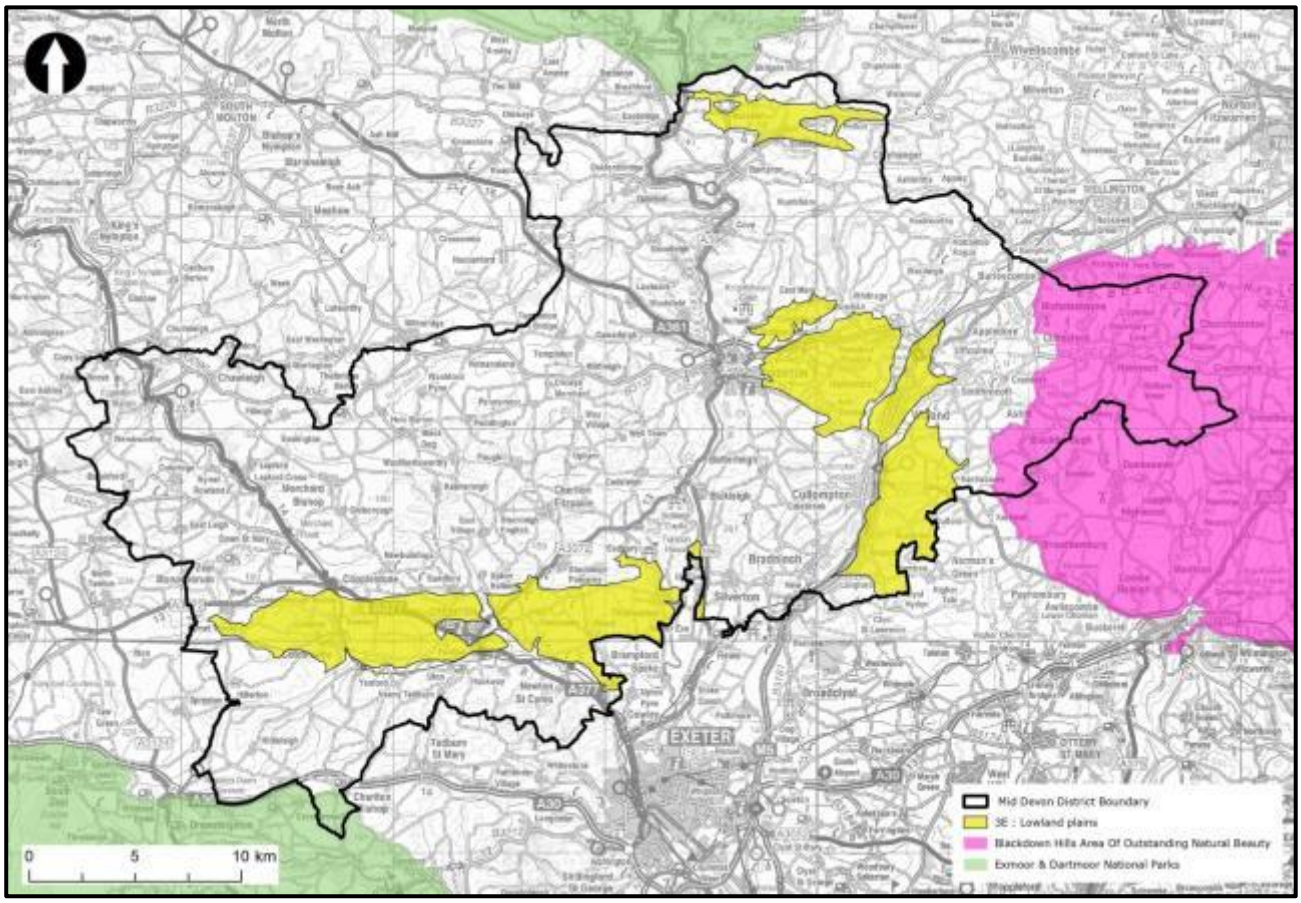
The part of the Culm Valley adjacent to Killerton House (within DCA 68: Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands) forms part of the setting of the Grade II* parkland, which will need to be taken into account when considering any developments[36]. Equally, locations within the Creedy Valley, within DCA 68: Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands, form part of the setting to the Grade II Shobrooke Park.

DCA 17: Culm Valley Lowlands contains the M5, mainline railway and overhead electricity lines which affect the perceptual character of the landscape. There may be some opportunities for small scale developments in these locations if they satisfy other guidance for the LCT outlined above.

[36] Please refer to LUC (2013) Killerton Setting Study. A report for the National Trust, available at https://new.middevon.gov.uk/media/103573/killerton_setting_study_report_.pdf

LCT 3E: Lowland Plains

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 02: Bampton and Beer Downs

DCA12: Clyst Lowland Farmlands

DCA 17: Culm Valley Lowlands

DCA 68: Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands

Key Landscape Characteristics[37]

- Gently rolling middle ground to lowland with smooth, rounded hilltops that have concave lower and convex upper slopes.
- Primarily managed as arable farmland with some areas of improved grassland. Mixed farming is the main agrarian pattern, with ley grassland forming an important part of the rotation of crops including barley, wheat, cabbage, corn and oil seed rape.
- For the most part it is characterised by the Red Devon Sandstone giving great soil fertility for arable farming resulting in Grade 1 and Grade 2 agricultural land classification.
- An agrarian landscape with medium to large scale field patterns.
- Fields are divided by hedgerows and hedgebanks, with the hedges forming spines along the rolling hills, with rib-like hedges crossing the convex slopes down into the valleys. These hedges are distinctive in their regularity and simplicity.
- Hedgerow trees are infrequent within the type. Individual trees within amalgamated fields indicate the positions of lost hedges.
- Copses and discrete woodlands are characteristic. In some areas the fields are defined by hedgerow trees with isolated clumps of trees on hillsides or ridge lines. Posbury Clump, a hilltop group of trees, is particularly visually prominent, forming a local landmark.
- Whilst there are a number of outlying, regularly distributed farms and villages, hamlets and small groups of houses, this is generally a sparsely populated area.
- Some orchards, once typical of the area, remain and there are small areas of market gardening.
- The landscape is dotted with large-scale farmsteads which tend to be located on the rolling sides of the land, above the valley floor. Villages tend to be located either near to valley crossing points or on the higher ground. Modern steel framed farm buildings are sited alongside the more traditional farm building style of cob and thatch.
- The tree cover is enriched by parks around small manor houses. There are two notable estates at Crediton present within the landscape, Creedy Park and Shobrooke Park. To the east of the district there are two parklands including Bridwell Park and Bradfield House, Uffculme. These have a parkland and large-scale pastoral character created through the absence of hedges and are characterful of clump tree planting within extensive shelterbelts.
- Views are highly variable. The landscape is semi-open with some long extensive views afforded from on top of hilltops. Where hedges are high views are mostly framed or confined with glimpses into and out only present from field gate openings.
- Historic features include Cadbury Castle between and to the west of Thorverton and Tiverton, hill clumps and the parklands near Crediton, as well as historic village centres with conservation area status.
- Roads are straight or very gently winding in nature and characterised by narrow routes that are lined with traditional hedgebanks. Land is traditionally highly valued for agriculture, and very little waste in the form of verges and wide roads.
- The landscape typically has short vistas terminated by a backdrop of curving hills with occasional long views from prominent locations, giving rise to a patchwork of irregular shaped fields with green pastures.

54% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within East Devon District

[37] [37] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity				Higher sensitivity
Landform			M		
	The landform of this LCT is generally low-lying and flat, with some rounded hilltops in parts. Some elevated areas contain visible slopes which rise up from the surrounding flatter landform.				
Sense of openness / enclosure			M		
	The character of this farmed landscape is generally semi-open with some long extensive views owing to the landform. Where high hedges and woodland copses exist they confine and restrict views creating a localised sense of enclosure.				
Field pattern and scale		L-M			
	Predominately a mixed agricultural landscape with medium to large-scale fields, including some larger, amalgamated fields. There is a mixture of field shapes although rectilinear fields are most common.				
Land cover				M-H	
	This is a diverse, mixed agricultural landscape including fields of pasture, grassland, arable cropping, market gardening and important areas of traditional orchards. Parkland estates, areas of Culm grassland and equine enterprises also contribute to the varied land cover patterns.				
Perceptual qualities		L-M			
	This LCT is generally sparsely populated with small groups of houses, farmsteads (including modern agricultural buildings), nucleated historic villages and hamlets. It also includes land on the fringes of Tiverton and Crediton, and is cut through by main roads (e.g. the A361, A377 and M5). Although the landscape is relatively well developed, it retains a strong traditional rural character with influences of managed estate parkland away from the main roads and settlements.				
Historic Landscape Character			M		
	The HLC classifies 43% of the LCT as modern enclosure, and 10% as post-medieval enclosure, indicating a lower sensitivity to solar PV development. Barton fields account for around 17% of the LCT, and medieval field enclosures based on strip fields 15% - which would be of higher sensitivity. Areas within and forming part of the setting to the Grade II parkland estates of Shobrooke Park and Bridwell would also be highly sensitive.				
Scenic and special qualities			M		
	Although not designated at a national level, the LCT includes valued scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. Those which could be affected by solar PV development include its attractive textured patchwork of mixed farming; notable estates and manor houses within the area with important visual relationships to the broader landscape (including through designed vistas); and intact traditional orchards. Part of the LCT is immediately adjacent to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include: it being a timeless landscape mostly free from intrusive development, striking views inside and out of the National Park, and its sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity. These special qualities might be highly sensitive to development within adjacent areas and should be considered in any proposals.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	The low-lying undulating landform, mixed field patterns with areas of intensive farming, presence of modern development and lack of national landscape designation may indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, although the landscape's open nature and rural character (away from settlements and roads), presence of medieval enclosures based on strip fields and valued areas of historic estate parkland and traditional orchards increases sensitivity.				

Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development	Very Small (<1ha)	**M**
	Small (>1-5ha)	**M**
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**M**
	Large (>10-15ha)	**M-H**
	Very large (>15ha)	**H**
	The scale of the landscape, sensitive field pattern and estate parkland means that this LCT is likely to be sensitive to 'large' and 'very large' solar PV developments. Areas of medieval field patterns and more prominent slopes may also be sensitive to medium-scale schemes.	

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics

A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 3E Lowland Plains LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below:

- Visual relationship between estates and the wider landscape (including through designed vistas), and the setting of important areas of historic parkland.
- The diverse land cover pattern with a patchwork texture including areas of remaining intact orchards, Culm grassland, Barton fields and medieval enclosure based on strip fields and estate parkland.
- Areas of open and strongly rural character.
- Locations within close proximity to Exmoor National Park, whose special qualities include striking views out of the protected landscape and a sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity.

Guidance for Development

The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this LCT has a moderate sensitivity to developments up to 10ha in size, a moderate-high sensitivity to large developments (>10-15ha) and a high sensitivity to developments greater than 15ha. This indicates that the landscape would be particularly sensitive to developments over 10ha in size and is unlikely to accommodate any developments over 15ha in size. Any proposals should be located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes, avoiding highly visible slopes and avoiding sensitive landcover types such as intact orchards and Culm grassland.

Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape (i.e. developments would not result in a significant cumulative impact on the LCT or overall change of landscape character), and that the rural patchwork is retained.

When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure:

- Consideration is given to the visual relationship between estates and the wider landscape (including through designed vistas), and the setting of areas of historic parkland to ensure heritage significance of these assets is maintained.
- The diverse land cover pattern with a patchwork texture including areas of remaining intact orchards and Culm grassland is maintained.
- Areas of Barton fields and medieval enclosures based on strip fields are maintained and remain recognisable in the landscape.
- Areas of open and strongly rural character are maintained.
- Solar PV development does not adversely affect the sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity associated with the Exmoor National Park, or unacceptably impact on the striking views from the National Park into the district.

Additional guidance specific to particular Landscape Character Areas

This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present.

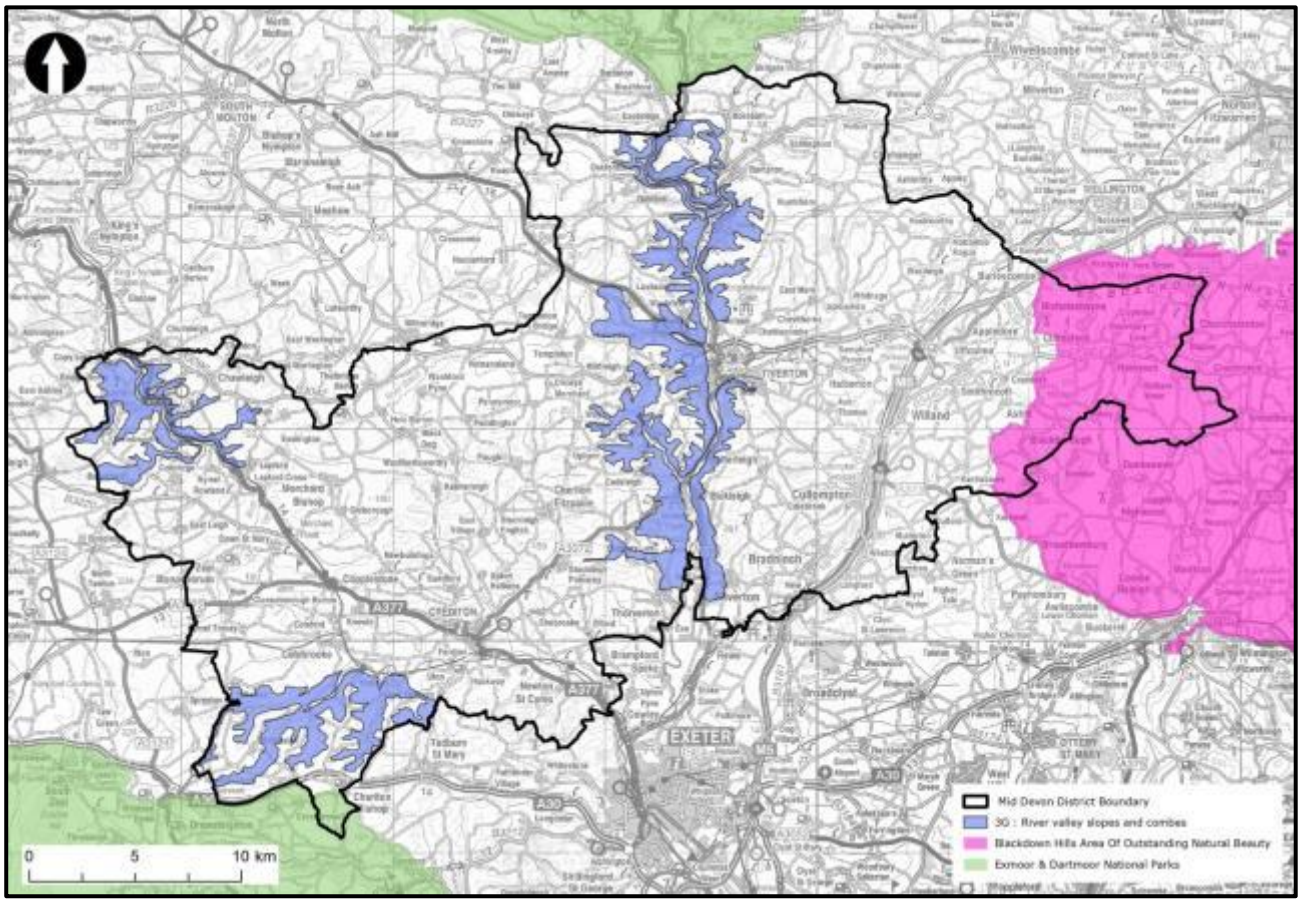
This LCT within DCA 02: Bampton and Beer Downs is likely to have a higher sensitivity to

larger scale developments due to the more intimate scale of the landscape compared to the LCT in other DCAs. When developing in this area views from the Exmoor National Park will also be of relevance.

This LCT in DCA 68: Yeo, Culm and Exe Lowlands is more strongly undulating and elevated than other areas. This means that the landscape is likely to be more sensitive than in other DCAs due to more visually prominent and elevated slopes. It is also overlooked by the Raddon Hills (LCT 1E in DCA 14) – therefore locations visible from these hills will also be more sensitive. Areas closer to development at Tiverton are likely to be less sensitive.

LCT 3G: River Valley Slopes and Combes

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 15: Cruwys Morchard Wooded and Farmed Valleys

DCA 24: Exe Valley

DCA 57: Taw Valley

DCA 67: Yeo Uplands and Slopes

Key Landscape Characteristics[38]

- This landscape of valley sides and valley floors, is strongly undulating with a variety of sloping land, sometimes incised, steeply rising and sometimes more gradual in character. A tightly rolling, medium to small scale landform, this landscape has generally been carved away by tributaries of the Rivers Exe, Taw and Creedy.
- Well-wooded and pastoral character created by the combination of regular patterns of dense hedges containing permanent, grazed pastures and deciduous woodlands, often ancient woodland (woodland aged 300-400 years old). Dark green swathes of coniferous woodland are also a dominant feature.
- The drainage patterns are defining characteristics key to both the resultant landform and vegetation. The sources of rivers in the incised valley heads are characterised by a lush damp character. The stream channels emerging from the valley heads are small in scale and have a meandering dendritic form. The landscape is defined by the moderately dry, fertile smooth slopes running into small-scale vales with a damp character.
- Woodlands are predominantly characterised by oak and extensive deciduous tree species. Backs Wood is a notable example of ancient woodland. Other ancient woodlands found within this type include patches of woodland such as Westbrook Wood adjacent to the River Exe stretching from Bolham to Oakford Bridge. These ancient woodlands are frequently very diverse and often contain rare or unusual species due to the low level of physical disturbance.
- Copses with a dense scrubby undergrowth are widespread. Where a well wooded characteristic presides, there is a strong sense of enclosure and the landform characteristics are emphasised by the wooded outlines of the hills.
- The scale is small to medium and the combination of the incised landform and repeated medium scale and field patterns give the landscape a relatively enclosed character.
- Hedgerows are often untrimmed and dense bounding regularly shaped, variable scale enclosures of pasture. Some fields are smaller and narrow, giving a linear form.
- Hedges are often tall and thick with intermittent trees that frame the narrow winding sunken roads and restrict views in and out of the landscape. Views are also generally limited due to vegetation and the typography of the landscape, providing only odd glimpses across the valley slopes.
- Soil erosion with red sandstone soil exposed is sometimes a feature on steeper slopes. The underlying red soils are apparent through buildings and the infrequent stone walls. However, there is a general lack of cultivation due to the steep landform profiles.
- Settlements are small and are not a visually dominant feature, as they tend to be nestled into the rolling landform.
- Rushes in the valley bottoms and lower slopes with characterful stone bridges and open water are all characteristics of this landscape.
- This is a landscape with high degrees of variation in terms of the levels of visual containment. Within the valleys and stream heads the enclosure is high, and consequently there are very few open views within or out of the type. Across the river valleys some longer views are afforded to the opposite slopes. A few of these vantage points have historic features located on the hilltops, indicating the defensive value of these vantages in protecting the surrounding farmlands.

92% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with remaining areas within Teignbridge and West Devon Districts.

[38] [38] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶				Higher sensitivity
Landform				M-H	
	Varied landform including much sloping land and prominent, incised valley sides rising steeply from the valley floors.				
Sense of openness / enclosure		L-M			
	The small-scale landform, well wooded steep valley slopes and untrimmed hedges creates high levels of enclosure.				
Field pattern and scale			M		
	In between extensive areas of woodland are hedged pastoral fields of variable scales, including some locations of small, narrow medieval strip fields.				
Land cover				M-H	
	This landscape is predominately covered with areas of woodland and coniferous plantations interspersed with areas of pastoral fields and pockets of rough ground creating a strong sense of naturalness.				
Perceptual qualities				M-H	
	Outskirts of large towns on the fringes of this LCT (Tiverton and Bampton) provide an influence of modern development, although away from the settlements where the landform is steeper there is a strong sense of tranquillity and remoteness with little built development aside from occasional farmsteads and houses. The densely wooded character with remote areas of rough ground adds an element of perceived naturalness.				
Historic Landscape Character			M		
	The HLC classifies 26% of the LCT as modern enclosure and 9% post-medieval enclosure indicating a lower sensitivity to solar PV development. Medieval enclosure based on strip fields accounts for around 24%, and Barton fields 5%, which would indicate higher sensitivity. Smaller pockets of ancient woodland, rough ground and parks and gardens would be particularly sensitive. Locations within and forming part of the setting of the Grade II* Listed Knightshayes Court, north of Tiverton, would also be highly sensitive.				
Scenic and special qualities				M-H	
	Although not designated at a national level, the LCT includes valued scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. Those which could be affected by solar PV development include strong and distinct landscape patterns which look unified and harmonious particularly when viewed from distant vantage points; the lack of extensive settlements and the relative isolation of farms and small-scale villages creating a strong sense of serenity; it being an impressive and 'beautiful' landscape that is colourful and has textural variety in the land cover and traditional land uses; woodlands which are highly valued for their colours and textures giving an intimate, secretive feel to the landscape.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although much of the landscape is enclosed by extensive tree cover and untrimmed hedges which could indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, the steep landform, high visibility of the slopes, high levels of tranquillity and remoteness, naturalistic character and important areas of ancient woodland and rough ground all increase levels of sensitivity.				
Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development	Very Small (<1ha)				**M-H**
	Small (>1-5ha)				**H**
	Medium (>5-10ha)				**H**
	Large (>10-15ha)				**H**
	Very large (>15ha)				**H**
	This LCT is highly sensitive to all sizes of solar PV development due to its small scale landform, extensive woodland cover, presence of small narrow fields of medieval origin and strong sense of tranquillity and naturalistic character.				

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

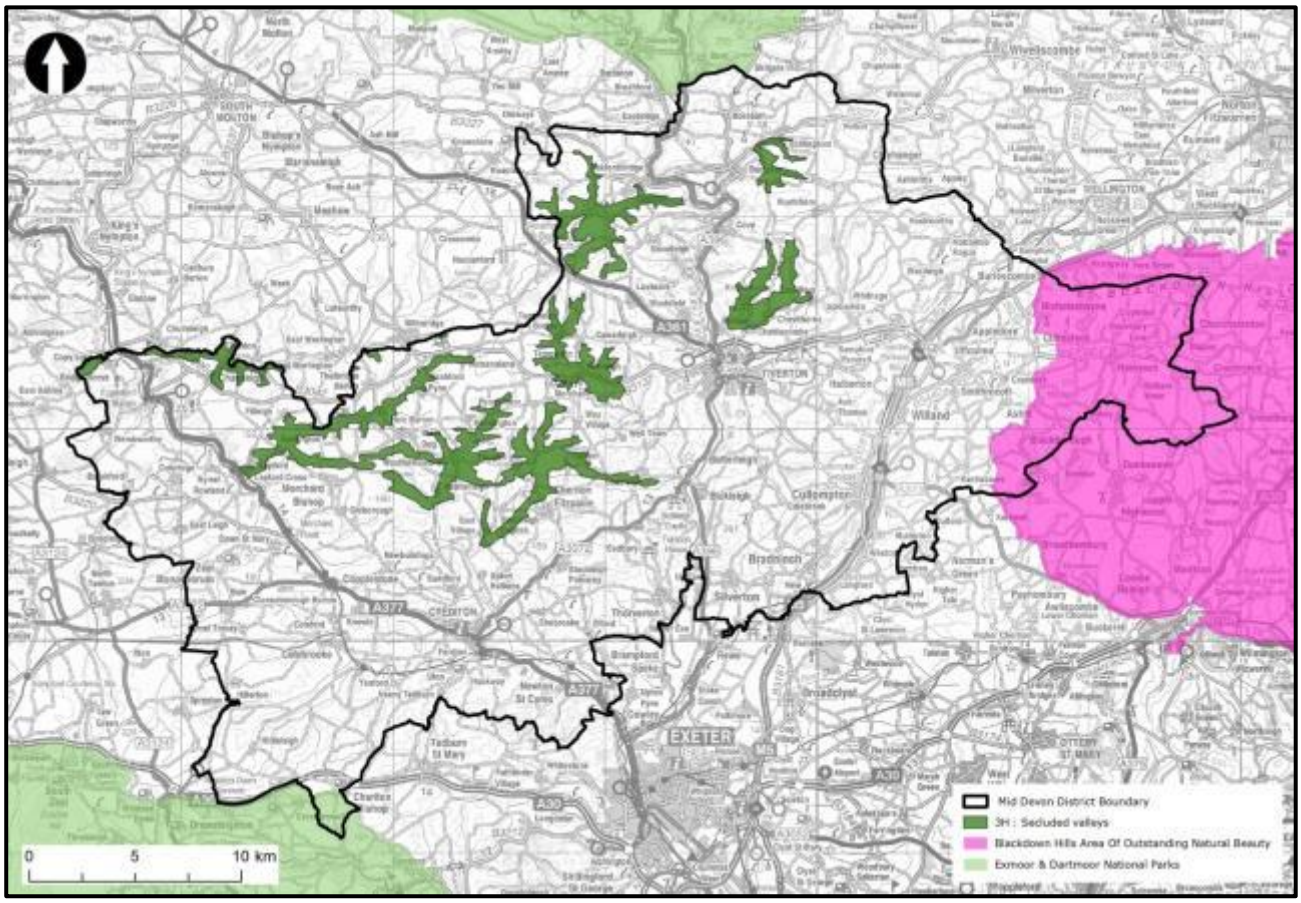
Sensitive features / characteristics
A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for 3G River Valley Slopes and Combes LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below: • Small-scale steeply undulating landform with incised and visually prominent slopes. • Little human influence contributing to the strong rural and 'secretive' character. • Its scenic qualities, including the textures and patterns produced by the variety in land- and woodland cover. • Highly sensitive land cover patterns including ancient semi-natural woodland, rough ground and parks and gardens – including the Grade II* Knightshayes Court. • Areas of small-scale medieval strip fields, of historic landscape importance.
Guidance for Development
The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that the landscape's small-scale landform and tranquil, naturalistic character make it highly sensitive to anything greater than 'very small' in size (<1ha). Any future schemes of this scale should be located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes, avoiding highly visible slopes and valued areas of semi-natural habitat (including ancient semi-natural woodland). Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not change the character of the landscape. When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure: • Solar PV schemes are not located on visually prominent upper valley slopes, especially those that are open in character. • The small scale of the landscape is maintained by ensuring schemes are in scale with the area in which they are located. • Locate development near existing settlement/ development so that the most remote and 'secretive' areas remain free of development. • The diverse land cover patterns that characterise this LCT are maintained and solar PV development does not dominate any one area. • Solar PV development does no adversely affect areas of valued areas of semi-natural habitat, particularly tracts of ancient semi-natural woodland. • Solar PV development does not adversely affect the integrity of areas of medieval strip field enclosures, Barton fields and rough ground. • The heritage value and setting of historic parks and gardens is conserved, including the Grade II* Knightshayes Court near Tiverton[39].

[39] Please refer to The Parks Agency (2007) The Setting of Knightshayes Park and Garden. A report for the National Trust, available at: https://new.middevon.gov.uk/media/103572/knightshayes_setting_study_2007.pdf

Additional guidance specific to particular Landscape Character Areas
This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present. In addition, intervisibility with elevated land above the LCT in DCA 24: Exe Valley (particularly areas of LCT 3A in the same DCA) and between the LCT in DCA 57: Taw Valley and the high ground overlooking it within DCA 30: High Culm Ridges (to the west) and DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor (to the east) should be taken into account when planning new solar PV schemes. In these locations care must be taken to avoid the most visually prominent upper slopes of the valleys when siting new development.

LCT 3H: Secluded Valleys

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 02: Bampton and Beer Downs

DCA 14: Crediton Rolling Farmland

DCA 15: Cruwys Morchard Wooded and Farmed Valleys

DCA 24: Exe Valley

DCA 54: Taw Valley

DCA 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor

Key Landscape Characteristics[40]

- Valley side and valley floor, strongly undulating and steeply sloping variety of sloping land, sometimes very steep, sometimes with a more gradual variable character.
- The valleys are characterised by a convex and round form towards the tops that become concave at the bottoms of the slopes. In places the slopes are as steep as 1:2 and exposed rock is sometimes evident.
- Valley bottoms are narrow with a wet and damp character. Drains are often present at the bottom of the relatively narrow spaces with meandering small streams. There tends to be little or no defined floodplain or valley bottom.
- Scrub and woodland dominate the steep slopes and narrow bottoms of the valleys. Heathland is occasionally present on the higher slopes within fields that generally have a pastoral character. On the lower slopes and within the valley bottoms, rushes and riparian species are common within a mosaic of scrub woodland and unimproved grassland.
- Woodland is extensive and characterised by upland oak woodlands such as Skilgate Wood at Beer Down in Huntsham and the Knightshayes parkland environs. A notable wet woodland can be found at Huntsham Castle.
- Coniferous plantations are widespread within the landscape. In the east of the district conifers wrap round the valley sides and include Huntsham Wood. Whilst it continues the theme of the well-wooded character, this land cover creates a dark and massive form that contrasts with the more traditional and lighter outlines of the indigenous oak woodlands.
- Tree lines on hedgebanks and sinuous lines of streamside trees add to the well-wooded and enclosed character.
- The woods at Cruwys Morchard and Templeton are notable examples of ancient oak woodland. Other examples of ancient woodland include the Great Wood west of Oakford, large tracts of woodland west of Stoodleigh, tracts of woodland adjacent to Little Dart River (near Chawleigh) and woodland adjacent to the Iron Mill Stream. These ancient woodlands are home to rare and threatened species, more than any other UK habitat.
- The settlement pattern is simple and dispersed with isolated dwellings tucked into the valley sides. Villages and hamlets tend to be linear in form, following the roads that frequently are located above the floodplain.
- Bridges and fords cross the watercourses and roads run up through the bottoms of the larger valleys, and create a break in the otherwise isolated nature of the landscape.
- Minor lanes crossing the valleys are steep and winding, with hairpin bends, and are enclosed by woodland and trees in adjacent hedgebanks. The landscape is generally not very accessible due to the steepness of the landform and vegetation with few public rights of way.
- There are a number of notable archaeological features within the landscape such as Huntsham Castle which has strong visual and physical connections, overlooking the valley.
- Many of the isolated farms and dwellings are of local historical importance, frequently constructed from local materials including stone, cob and thatch. They are typically traditional Devon farmhouses with outbuildings and barns, reflecting the agrarian nature of the district.
- Overhanging trees frequently frame the narrow winding road and restrict views creating a tunnel effect. Views tend to be small scale and confined, only allowing odd glimpses across the valleys.

62% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within North Devon and Torridge Districts

[40] [40] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶				Higher sensitivity
Landform				M-H	
	Narrow steep-sided valleys with strong undulations, very steep in places with exposed rock and prominent slopes. Streams and rivers follow the valley floors.				
Sense of openness / enclosure		L-M			
	A landscape which is well wooded with extensive areas of ancient, deciduous and coniferous woodland, areas of scrub and tree lined hedgebanks which provide high levels of enclosure (particularly when combined with the enclosed nature of the landform).				
Field pattern and scale			M		
	This LCT is defined by a pattern of small to medium-scale fields, irregular in shape, including historically important medieval and Barton fields.				
Land cover					H
	The area is covered extensively with woodland (including ancient, deciduous and coniferous plantations) which cloak the valley sides. Areas of pastoral farmland, scrub and heathland break up the woodland blocks as do stretches of rushy meadows along the streams and patches of wet woodland along the valley floors.				
Perceptual qualities				M-H	
	This LCT has a peaceful and secluded nature as a result of the steep inaccessible landform and lack of development, with dense woodland cover creating a naturalistic character. Away from the roads the levels of isolation and tranquillity are increased.				
Historic Landscape Character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that the LCT predominantly comprises modern enclosure (27%) and post-medieval fields (8%) - likely to be of low sensitivity to solar PV development and medieval enclosure based on strip fields (25%) and Barton fields (6%) which would be of higher sensitivity. Areas of woodland (15%) and small patches of rough ground (4%) would be particularly sensitive to solar PV development. Locations within and forming part of the setting of the Grade II* Listed Knightshayes Court, north of Tiverton, would also be highly sensitive.				
Scenic and special qualities				M-H	
	Although not designated at a national level, the LCT includes valued scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. Those which could be affected by solar PV development include its generally peaceful and secluded character; the presence of a number of valued historic features; an area of scenic beauty; it being a traditional Devon landscape with distinct hedgerows and woodland, hedges, small fields and narrow sunken lanes; high levels of enclosure from woodland and hedge boundaries giving a secretive, intimate feeling to the landscape; tranquil and remote landscape with isolated farmsteads and small-scale villages.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	Although the high level of enclosure provided by dense woodland cover and high hedgebanks which could indicate a lower sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, the prominent visible slopes, naturalistic land cover, imitate scale and small-scale field patterns in the valleys, in addition to the LCT's sense of isolation and high levels of tranquillity, all increase levels of sensitivity.				
Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development	Very Small (<1ha)				**M-H**
	Small (>1-5ha)				**M-H**
	Medium (>5-10ha)				**H**
	Large (>10-15ha)				**H**
	Very large (>15ha)				**H**
	The intimate and small-scale nature of the valleys and field patterns means				

	that this LCT is likely to be highly sensitive to medium, large and very large scale developments.

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

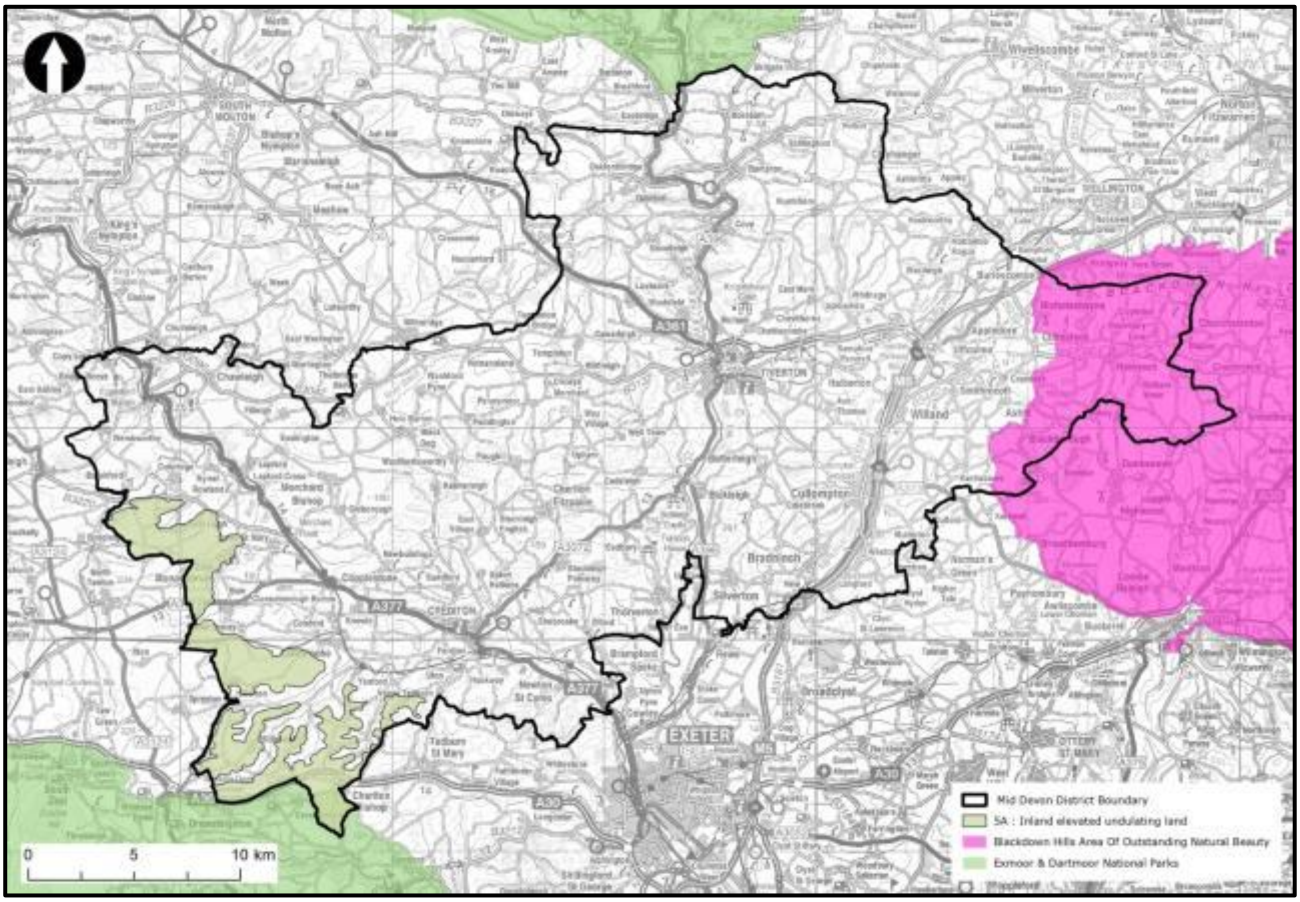
Sensitive features / characteristics
A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for the 3H Secluded Valleys LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below: • Its exposed and prominent valley slopes, defined by their naturalistic character. • Diverse land cover including valued areas of ancient woodland, historic medieval and Barton fields and small patches of rough ground. • Its high levels of tranquillity and perceived naturalness. • Its valued scenic qualities and archetypal Devon character.
Guidance for Development
The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that the landscape's small-scale landform and secluded, naturalistic character make it highly sensitive to anything greater than 'small' in size. Any future schemes should be at the smaller end of the size bracket (and no larger than 5ha) and located in enclosed areas and on lower slopes, avoiding highly visible slopes and valued areas of semi-natural habitat (including ancient semi-natural woodland). Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not change the character of the landscape. When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure: • Solar PV schemes are not located on visually prominent upper valley slopes, especially those that are more open in character (i.e. between blocks of woodland). • The small scale of the landscape is maintained by ensuring schemes are in scale with the area in which they are located. • Development is located near existing settlement/ development so that the most remote and secluded areas remain free of development. • The diverse land cover patterns that characterise this LCT are maintained and solar PV development does not dominate any one area. • Solar PV development does not adversely affect areas of valued areas of semi-natural habitat, including areas of semi-natural woodland, rushy meadows and riparian vegetation. • Solar PV development does not adversely affect the integrity of areas of medieval strip field enclosures, Barton fields and sensitive tracts of rough ground. • The heritage value and setting of the Grade II* Knightshayes Court near Tiverton[41] are conserved.
Additional guidance specific to particular Landscape Character Areas
This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present. In addition, in all DCAs where this LCT occurs, intervisibility with surrounding elevated

[41] Please refer to The Parks Agency (2007) The Setting of Knightshayes Park and Garden. A report for the National Trust, available at: https://new.middevon.gov.uk/media/103572/knightshayes_setting_study_2007.pdf

land should be taken into consideration, particularly with areas of LCT 3A in DCAs 2: Bampton and Beer Downs, 15: Cruwys Morchard Wooded & Farmed Valleys and 65: Witheridge and Rackenford Moor; and areas of LCT 1F also above the valleys found in DCA 65. In these locations care must be taken to avoid the most visually prominent upper slopes of the valleys when siting new development.

LCT 5A: Inland Elevated Undulating Land

LCT Location Map



Character Areas

DCA 33: High Taw Farmland

DCA 67: Yeo Uplands and Slopes

Key Landscape Characteristics[42]

- Medium to large scale gently rolling to steeply sloping landform with high points of over 220m above the valley bottoms.
- Variable shaped field patterns, with low tightly clipped hedgerows as the dominant field boundary. Species rich hedgebanks include honeysuckle, wild rose, chestnut, oak, ivy, bramble, willow and bracken.
- Hedge patterns are highly visible, being seen from the roads within the type as they meander across the hillsides and slopes.
- Permanent grassland is the dominant land use pattern. Ley grassland and small areas of cultivated land tend to occur on the lower, gentler slopes and on the higher land close to the plateau where again the slopes are gentler. Sheep are the predominant livestock.
- Some of the grassland, particularly on the steeper slopes, contains stands of semi-natural vegetation, including areas of bracken and gorse, within the mosaic of fields and on field margins and within hedges.
- Springs emerge from the upper slopes forming brooks flowing northerly into a number of tributaries of the River Yeo, which lies to the north of the type. These watercourses have a meandering form and dendritic pattern.
- There is generally a lack of visually prominent buildings, with isolated houses and cottages sited sympathetically into the landscape. Traditional building style includes brick, cob, thatch and slate roofs.
- Trees are sparse, with little woodland and copses.
- The absence of hedgerows is obvious where wooden fencing is present on turf banks.
- Open and exposed landscape where hedgebanks allow views into and out with extensive views from plateaux and higher slopes. Windswept stunted trees on hilltops in hedgerows are a key characteristic.
- This landscape is highly visible from land to the north and from the edge of Dartmoor, and the higher peaks within the main mass of the moor. The A30 is both adjacent to and passes within the type, from which some views are afforded.
- Settlement patterns defined by villages and hamlets are connected by winding narrow roads with isolated farms well-sited within an isolated landscape.

34% of the LCT falls within Mid Devon District, with the remainder falling within West Devon and Teignbridge Districts

[42] Taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Devon District (2011), downloaded from: http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8682

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV Development

Criteria	Lower sensitivity ▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▪▶				Higher sensitivity
Landform				M-H	
	This is a medium to large-scale landscape with finger-like elevated rolling to steep hills situated in the south west corner of Mid Devon. Elevation varies from 80m to 230m AOD and includes some highly visible, elevated slopes.				
Sense of openness / enclosure			M		
	Relatively open, particularly on higher, more exposed ground. Some enclosure is provided by hedgebanks / hedgerow trees and woodland within tributary valleys. Small farm woods, occasional conifer blocks and avenues of beech provide some enclosure elsewhere.				
Field pattern and scale			M		
	Medium to large-scale irregular fields of mixed agricultural farmland predominately modern enclosure with areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields and some Barton Fields.				
Land cover			M		
	Land cover is predominately pastoral with some patches of semi-natural land cover including bracken and gorse, and areas of woodland along lower slopes adjacent to streams. There are also isolated settlements (houses and cottages), hedgebanks and trees.				
Perceptual qualities			M		
	The landscape has a strongly rural character and a strong sense of isolation owing to an overall lack of modern development and dominance of traditional pastoral farming. However, most of the landscape is farmed and the presence of the A30 and scattered development contribute to human activity.				
Historic Landscape Character			M		
	The Devon HLC indicates that a large part of the landscape type is made up of modern enclosure (39%) and post-medieval enclosure (14%) - generally lower sensitivity to solar PV development. However there are areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields (28%) that have a higher sensitivity, as well as smaller areas of Barton fields and other woodland (higher sensitivity).				
Scenic and special qualities			M		
	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP
	5.5% of this LCT lies with the Dartmoor National Park. The Dartmoor National Park Management Plan includes special qualities which may be affected by solar PV development. Relevant to this LCT (including land outside the National Park), these include its broad sweeping horizons with extensive views across Devon, vast skies, strong sense of remoteness and isolation, strong medieval pattern of scattered farmsteads, hamlets and villages linked by an intimate pattern of sunken lanes, and its value as a timeless unspoilt and tranquil place. The remainder of the area has scenic qualities described in the 'special qualities' section of Mid Devon Landscape Character Assessment. These include the traditional and inherent patterns of this landscape type are strongly evident and have been altered far less over the last century than other landscape types; quiet and exposed working rural landscape; strong sense of isolation with far reaching views from higher areas; the repeated patterns of the irregularly hedge-enclosed fields creating inherent pastoral patterns that are clear and discernible; its strong cultural association with the adjacent landscape of Dartmoor that physically dwarfs its foothills; it forming part of the setting of the moor – very important to the value and appreciation of Dartmoor.				
Discussion on landscape sensitivity	The mixed land cover patterns with areas of woodland and naturalistic bracken and scrub, elevated land with some prominent slopes, rural character and high visibility from Dartmoor National Park indicate a higher sensitivity to the principle of solar PV development, while the medium to large scale landform, strongly farmed character and presence of existing				

	human influence reduce the levels of sensitivity. Within the National Park the special qualities including its strong sense of remoteness, wildness and isolation, broad sweeping horizons and extensive views and sense of timelessness further increase sensitivity. Areas close to the National Park are also likely to be more sensitive (but this would need to be judged on a case-by-case basis).

	Land outside the NP		Land within the NP	
Sensitivity to different sizes of solar PV development	Very Small (<1ha)	**M**	Very Small (<1ha)	**M-H**
	Small (>1-5ha)	**M**	Small (>1-5ha)	**M-H**
	Medium (>5-10ha)	**M**	Medium (>5-10ha)	**H**
	Large (>10-15ha)	**M-H**	Large (>10-15ha)	**H**
	Very large (>15ha)	**H**	Very large (>15ha)	**H**
	The scale of the fields in this LCT indicate that it is likely to be highly sensitive to 'very large' scale solar PV developments, as well as those at the top of the 'large' size band. Areas within Dartmoor National Park will be more sensitive to solar PV development, and areas close to the National Park are likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis)			

Key Sensitivities and guidance for solar PV development

Sensitive features / characteristics
A summary list of the key sensitive features and characteristics for the 5A Inland Elevated Undulating Land LCT in relation to solar PV development is included below: • Steeply sloping land form with visible slopes. • Its strongly rural and isolated character. • Sensitive historic land cover types including medieval enclosures based on strip fields and Barton fields. • The strong cultural associations with Dartmoor, and the landscape's role as a setting to the National Park. • Special qualities of Dartmoor National Park including the strong sense of remoteness and wildness, broad sweeping horizons, vast skies and extensive views and its sense of timelessness.
Guidance for Development
The landscape sensitivity assessment indicates that this LCT has a moderate sensitivity to developments up to 10ha in size, a moderate-high sensitivity to large developments (>10-15ha) and a high sensitivity to developments greater than 15ha. This indicates that the landscape would be particularly sensitive to developments over 10ha in size and unlikely to be able to accommodate developments greater than 15ha without introducing a significant change to landscape character. Any proposals should be located in more enclosed areas and on lower slopes, avoiding highly visible slopes and avoiding sensitive landcover types such as woodland and historic medieval or Barton fields. Within Dartmoor National Park, the landscape would be highly sensitive to anything other than 'very small' or 'small' sensitively sited schemes. Areas close to the National Park are also likely to have a higher sensitivity (although this will need to be judged on a case by case basis). Multiple developments within the LCT should be of a similar scale and design (in terms of siting, layout, scale, form and relationship to key characteristics) to maintain a simple image and reinforce links between landscape characteristics and design response within the LCT. The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape or have a defining influence on the overall experience of this strongly rural landscape. When siting and designing solar PV developments in this LCT the generic guidance within Chapter 3 of the Devon Landscape Policy Group's Advice Note No. 2: *Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape* should be followed particularly when considering the cumulative impacts of multiple schemes. In addition, within this LCT particular care will need to be taken to ensure: • Areas of medieval enclosure based on strip fields and Barton fields are maintained and remain recognisable in the landscape. • The landscape's strong patchwork pattern of traditional pastoral fields is retained. • Development is located near existing settlement/ development so that the most isolated and strongly rural areas remain free of development – particularly those locations that form a setting to Dartmoor National Park. • Solar PV development does no adversely affect areas of valued areas of semi-natural habitat, including areas of bracken, gorse and streamside woodlands. • Solar PV development does not adversely affect the strong sense of remoteness and timelessness associated with Dartmoor National Park, or unacceptably impact on

the broad sweeping horizons and extensive views across Devon from the Park (including the district).
Additional Guidance Specific to Particular Landscape Character Areas
This guidance will apply consistently for all Devon Character Areas where this LCT is present. In addition, in DCA 67: Yeo Uplands and Slopes, special attention will be required to ensure development does not adversely affect the remote and timelessness qualities associated with Dartmoor National Park, and does not unacceptably impact on the sweeping horizons and extensive views into Mid Devon from the National Park. The most prominent, open slopes within and visually linked to the wider designated landscape should be avoided when siting new development. Valued tracts of naturalistic Culm Grassland, forming a wider ecological network with nearby locations of LCT 1F Farmed Lowland Moorland and Culm Grassland, should be avoided in DCA 33: High Taw Farmland.